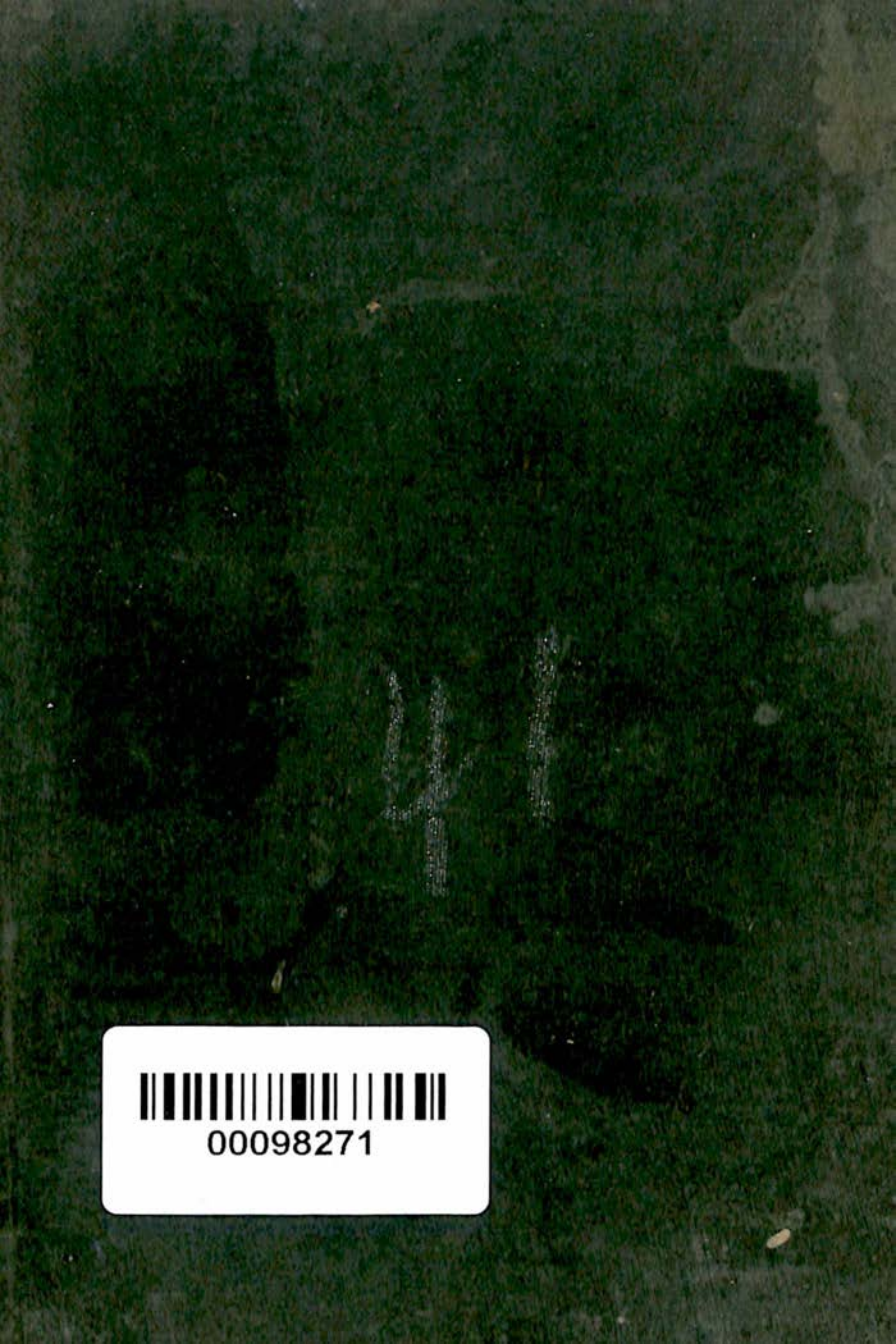
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ROMANTIC ANNALS

OF A

NAVAL FAMILY.

WITH LETTERS FROM HIS MAJESTY WILLIAM IV. AND ADMIRALS LORDS HOWE, HOOD, SIR HENRY MARTIN, SIR HUGH CHRISTIAN, ETC., ETC.

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BY

MRS. ARTHUR TRAHERNE.

LONDON: HENRY S. KING & CO.,

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1873

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Dedicated,

BY KIND PERMISSION,

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE ADMIRAL

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE, G.C.B.

PREFACE.

In publishing the following "Annals of a Naval Family," I am most anxious to explain that many of the romantic incidents which I relate are involved in much obscurity. The *names* given to the principal actors in the gambling transactions and tragic death of Captain Thomas Christian are purely fictitious; they were never known to either my father or myself; the tender age of the only son he left at the time being probably the cause of their being wholly forgotten. All the events I have recorded were related to me by my father, Rear-Admiral Hood Hanway Christian, and firmly believed by him.

Trusting as I do entirely to my memory, in all the intimate relations of the family, I can only say that should any who kindly read them, find misstatements or inaccuracies, and will communicate with me, I will gratefully correct them. I venture to solicit indulgence for the imperfect manner in which I "tell the tale, as 'twas told to me."

The letters of His Majesty William IV. are strict copies of those in my possession, as are also those of Admirals Lords Howe and Hood, Sir Henry Martin, Sir Hugh Christian, etc, etc.

HARRIET MARGARET ANNE TRAHERNE.

Glan-y-Dur, Crickhowell,
May, 1873.

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ROMANTIC ANNALS.

CHAPTER I.

FORESHADOWING.

BY the side of a tree-shaded pond stood a fair and noble boy watching with deep interest the launch of a small boat, evidently of his own construction. Kneeling close by him, and gently pushing the little vessel out into the water, to the utmost extent of his arm's length, was a negro lad, evidently his attendant, as he was clad in the gorgeous livery of that pĕriod, namely, the year 1755.

The little boat was a miniature brig, with two

masts and six sails, the latter neatly hemmed, and *female* fingers might be traced also in the rigging, so delicately was it put together. Steadily the little ship glided away from the bank, but ere it had gone far it heeled over and lay broadside on the mimic sea.

"Oh, Topaze," exclaimed the boy, in a tone of great vexation, "if I were only three inches high, and able to go aboard of her, I could manage the sails and keep her up, and steer her right across the pond, I'm sure."

"You look very funny den, young massa, and missy lady not like to have son like little Tom Thumb," and the negro laughed merrily.

"But what can we do to make her sail? This is the tenth time we've tried her, and I am *determined* she shall go across the pond, and then I mean to christen her the 'Anne,' after my mother. Do make her sail properly, Topaze," said the boy, stamping his foot.

"Don't be down-hearted, massa, we'll try agin, she sail by-bye. I allers been used to ships. I's born at sea, and lived allers aboard, till dear massa bought me. I'll soon get her back." So saying, Topaze, with the aid of a long pole, brought the ship on shore again, and sitting down, he reefed two of the top-sails, and then again they propelled their precious brig out into deep water.

This time she held on her way pretty well; though swaying in a threatening way from side to side, still she kept upright, and the proprietors were rejoiced, Topaze exclaiming, "Now there's a breeze, she goes lovely!" and he forthwith executed a kind of negro dance upon the bank, knocking his knees together and stamping his feet, throwing up his arms, and singing a would-be merry negro song, which sounded however very dismal.

The boy, too, was delighted at the happy result of their much-tried patience, and taking

off his cap he cheered on the little craft as it continued its course happily enough across the pond.

Their rejoicings were shared by an unseen spectator, for a hearty shout of applause reached them, and made the lads turn round with astonishment, when they perceived with amazement a naval officer, in the full uniform of an admiral, advancing towards them.

"Bravo! boys," said he, as he approached. "I have been watching you for some time, and have admired your perseverance and patience: nothing like it in this world; never let yourselves be beaten—no success without labour—no result without perseverance; remember that through life."

Both the boy and Topaze were covered with confusion, though full of a secret joy in the praises of the Admiral; and the former, colouring deeply, doffed his cap, and with a look of sparkling happiness in his blue eyes said, "Are

you, sir, the honoured guest my mother expects to-day?"

"I think I am, my boy, if you are Hugh Christian, as I can guess, by your likeness to your father. Is that your name?"

"It is, sir," replied Hugh, grasping warmly the hand held cordially out to him.

"And yours, boy," asked the Admiral, turning to the negro, "is it not Topaze?"

"Yees, yees," said the negro, grinning with delight, showing his fine white teeth. "I remember your honour well;" and he crossed his arms on his chest, respectfully bowing his head.

"To be sure! to be sure! you've seen me often enough. You were smaller than young master here when I first saw you. And now, Hugh, I will tell you," said the Admiral kindly, "why your boat won't sail long upright. You have put no ballast in her; run round, Topaze, and bring her back to me."

A command Topaze executed in the twinkling of an eye; flying round the pond, with his crimson and yellow dress, he looked like some strange tropical bird among the shrubs.

Meantime the Admiral seated himself on the bank, and picked up four small stones, saying, "These will do for the ballast, without which she must heel over; two we'll put fore and two aft," which he proceeded to do when Topaze presented the boat to him.

"Now," said he, "she will sail all right; but I heard you say, Hugh, you would christen her after your lady mother. And I'll do it for you; if you will run up to the house and ask your mother, she will, I am sure, send me a goblet of wine to drink, and we'll save enough to christen the boat: will you go?"

"Most willingly, sir. And I will tell my mother of your arrival, and that you will see her when you have christened the brig." So saying, Hugh saluted the Admiral, raising his

cap respectfully, and then flew off wild with delight.

"How old are you now, Topaze?" asked the Admiral when they were alone.

"I dunno, sir, exactly; but I's 'spect I's fifteen year;" and raising the sleeve of his coat he showed the Admiral a tattoo mark of the year in which he had been bought, 1745, with the initials J. C. under the date. "Massa had that done, he told me, when he bought me."

"Ah!" said the Admiral, as he examined the mark, "1745, that will make you just fifteen indeed, for you were five years old when you were bought, and a regular little piccanino full of mischief. Can you recollect the ship, Topaze? and the monkey? and the scrapes you both got into off the coast of Africa?"

"Yees, sir, I 'member all! the monkey too! He bit me many a time! and he broke the glass, and the steward he flog me,

'cause monkey said I did it;" and Topaze looked lugubrious at the recollection of his wrongs.

"And when did your poor master die, Topaze?"

"He was killed, sir! poor massa! killed in London." And the negro's black eyes glistened with tears. "We never saw him agin! I'd have died for massa! he allus so kind to me! but lady missis very kind too, and little massa! and I's very happy now, though sorry for old massa—very." And Topaze fairly sobbed, with that rapid change from joy to grief peculiar to the coloured race, with their excitable nerves.

The Admiral patted him kindly on the shoulder, diverting his thoughts by asking,

"And you love your young massa, Topaze?"

"Oh, yes, sir! he very sweet good child, but hab plenty of spirit! He been under my care allus, and does a'most as well as me with

the ships, and games, riding and walking; I allus go with him."

"And the lady mistress?"

"Oh, she much changed, sir! She no laugh as she did afore! but so quiet, so soft! and allus at work, doing good for young massa Hugh and the sick peoples in the village."

Meanwhile Hugh had rushed to the house, and knowing his mother was in her store-room, threw himself over the sill of the window, which was on the ground-floor, bursting thus upon his mother, a lady "very fair to see," standing at a table in the middle of the room, engaged in the homely occupation of breaking up lump sugar.

"Dear mother!" exclaimed Hugh, breathless with excitement, "dear mother, the Admiral is come!"

"My love, how you startled me! The Admiral come! How? I never saw any

carriage, or heard the sound of one. Are you sure?"

"Quite sure, dearest mammy! I have been talking to him, and he admires my boat, and wants some wine to christen her, and we are going to call her 'The Anne,' after you; and will you please let me carry some wine down, for the Admiral to drink, you know, and the rest to throw over the ship. And he bid me say he'll come up to see you soon."

"Dear me!" said Anne, laying down her pincers with much surprise. "Did he send you for the wine? Where is the Admiral now?"

"Down at the pond, dear mother. Please let me carry the wine down."

"You shall, my love," said Anne, smiling and kissing the eager handsome boy. "I will fetch it for you; sit down until I come back," which she did shortly, with a handsomely-chased goblet containing canary wine in one hand, and

a little Dutch box of curious silver workmanship in the other, with biscuits. "Can you carry them steadily, my child, or shall Margot go with you?"

"'No, no! please!" said Hugh. "Let me carry them myself! Only first I'll just jump out of the window again—so. Now I am ready, dear mother, and thank you!" So saying he received the refreshments from his mother, and her message to the Admiral to come up whenever he liked, she would be ready for his visit.

With this Hugh, walking as fast and as quickly as he could, soon rejoined the Admiral. Topaze sprang to meet him as soon as he came in sight, and relieved him of the biscuit-box. The wine Hugh presented, with much grace and joy, to the kind Admiral, proud and pleased by the importance of his mission, saying,

"My mother, sir, bids you welcome. She will be ready to see you whenever you like!"

"Thankee, my boy!" So saying, the Ad-

miral took a long draught of the wine—so long, indeed, that Hugh involuntarily looked nervous lest the christening should be forgotten.

The Admiral read the expression of his eyes, for he put down the goblet, laughing and saying, "There's enough, Hugh, to christen many toy ships left! and now here goes!" With that he put the boat into the water with one hand, and with the other threw the wine over her, saying, as he pushed her off, "Good luck to the little Anne!"

Hugh and Topaze waved their caps and shouted, undismayed by the presence of the kind Admiral, and watched with joy the little brig as she gallantly sailed rapidly across the pond, the wind having risen considerably, and the ripples, now in little wavelets, gave motion enough to the balanced vessel, but though she rolled and pitched in fine style she remained upright, and all united to make the miniature naval scene complete!

"Oh, sir," said Hugh now, gratefully, "I am so much obliged to you for your kindness! I am so fond of my ships, and wish I could be a real sailor!"

"So you shall, Hugh, if your lady mother consents, and that's what brings me here. Now we will leave Topaze to bring the goblet back and take care of the ship, and stroll up to the house."

Hugh walked confidentially by the Admiral's side, and was somewhat surprised at the knowledge he showed of the little path leading to the oak avenue, which led up to the porch of the Manor House.

CHAPTER II.

THE MOTHER.

ANNE CHRISTIAN, the lady of the Manor of Hooknorton, the mother of young Hugh, who interrupted her domestic employment in the store-room in so brusque a way, was the widow of Captain Thomas Christian of the Royal Navy, and still a lovely woman of only eight-and-twenty.

Her attire even at this early hour was both elegant and picturesque; a black silk half-high dress, with kirtle in the style of that day; her bosom covered with folds of fine Indian muslin, and sleeves of the same, turned back, for the convenience of her work, and displaying her

white arms; the fair hair, raised high on the forehead, over a cushion, and little curls escaping round her head, framed as interesting a face as one could behold anywhere; the expression of her countenance was inexpressibly plaintive and sweet, the eyebrows delicately marked, but almost straight, the eyes a bright changing grey, with long dark lashes, the nose small and short, the mouth beautiful. A point lace kerchief was lightly thrown over the hair and tied under the chin, setting off the delicate complexion.

The white hands, the dignity of Anne's appearance and manner, even in the midst of her homely occupation, the "je ne sais quoi" of her whole appearance, bore the unmistakable "cachet" of birth, and proclaimed the noble blood of the Lady of the Manor, her father having been Owen Hughes, Esq., of North Wales, a near member of Lord Dinorben's family. She was an only child, and heiress.

In common with ladies of birth and position in the eighteenth century, Anne herself fulfilled the daily duties of housekeeper in her household. Every department at Hooknorton was under her own superintendence,—the dairy, the kitchen, the store-room, all had their portion of time; and the education of her only son Hugh, when with her from school, occupied several hours; for, highly educated herself, she was anxious to impart to him her knowledge of French, and above all, some of those deep and precious truths, learnt at the beloved mother's knee, and constantly the *charmed amulet* a man wears through life upon his heart!

These occupations, with the recreation of tapestry, the daily-written diary, and when possible some study of the favourite works of Milton and Shakespeare, which in those days were cherished and read as "household words" by the educated of the land, filled

up the daily round of duty and pleasure for the young widowed mother. Among her recreations were the visits to the poor and sick upon the estate and in the nearest village.

Anne would have had no time for her multitudinous employments but for the habit of rising every morning at five o'clock, then the prevailing custom in country mansions.

Hugh was a handsome boy, with fine intellectual forehead, and deep blue eyes, counterbalancing the unclassical nose, which was decidedly *retroussé*, though delicate and short; his mouth was firm and small, and his slight frame full of health and apparent energy. In countenance he especially resembled his mother.

After Hugh's abrupt interview with his mother was over, and the wine despatched for christening the little boat, Anne watched her son from the window for a few moments with an expression of deep affection and pride on her

face; but pleasant thoughts bring sad thoughts to one's mind, and tears rose to her sweet eyes as she turned from the window with a sigh.

Hastily then she gathered up the broken sugar into a pile on the table, and carefully covered it with a white cloth. After closing the open window she left the room to prepare for her guest.

The Manor House, at which the above scene took place, was a picturesque old building of greystone, with fine mullioned windows on the right and left of the old-fashioned porch, which was large enough for seats on either side.

The massive oak door opened into a moderately-sized hall, rather gloomy looking, the windows, with their diamond panes, admitting little light.

There were comfortable seats in the deep oriel windows, covered with red cloth,—just the seats one would love to sit and read in on a summer's day.

A magnificent high chimney, of carved wood-work, faced the door; the large brass dogs, brightly polished up, enlivened the deep ingle beneath; numerous naval weapons were fancifully arranged upon the walls, the handsome swords, of both Captain Hugh Christian, born in 1675, and Captain Thomas Christian, his only son, who died in 1755, hung together, crossed; their handsome hilts, one of carved ivory, and the other of gold, and jewelled, embellished the dark wood-work of the chimney-piece. Several vessels of old-fashioned plate, and bowls of precious china, were conspicuous upon a carved oak side-table at one end of the hall, and another larger table stood in the centre; upon the floor was fresh sweet straw; high-backed oak chairs, covered with tapestry, made up the furniture of that portion of the house generally used for meals when guests were there.

The withdrawing-room opened from the hall;

the entrance, at the opposite end to the carved side-table, was concealed by a heavy velvet curtain. The room itself was charming; a sarge oriel window gave light enough for its eize, even though filled with lattice-panes; the oak floor was partially covered with a handsome Turkish carpet—very rare in those days. The treasures of the East seemed to be accumulated around, for Chinese cabinets of great beauty, japanned in black and gold, ornamented one side of the room, filled with lovely china, ivory chessmen, gold and silver idols, work-boxes of sandal-wood, and huge jars, were to be seen, collected and arranged around with much taste.

The chimney-piece was also of carved wood, and, let into the *oak-work*, which framed the picture, was a painting of great beauty, representing two half-length figures; one an officer in naval uniform, a fair slight handsome man, the other a young girl, whose delicate hands were clasped round the arm of her com

panion;—in her we can recognize the youthful form of Anne, robed in white brocaded silk, with lace ruffles round the white throat, a rose in the fair brown hair; it is indeed the same face, younger, evidently, by ten years; the sweet girlish face breathing love and hope and peace as she fondly gazes up to her youthful husband. No touch of anxiety, no care rests there! no shadow of coming sorrow! "Heaven from all creatures hides the Book of Fate!"

Still can we read upon Anne's plaintive countenance peace and hope and resignation; but bitter grief and humiliation have left their impress there. Those who have the gift of reading faces—and each tells its tale—could discern the trials that had left their traces on the lovely features. As upon the mighty deep the calm that succeeds the storm bears upon its surface the remnants of foam—the mast, the plank, the cask, the torn sail, telling us too surely of the past hurricane; betraying the

awful ravages, the lives, the hopes, the fears, engulfed for aye beneath that *now* placid ocean-bosom, so is it with the human face; the soul shines forth purified, ennobled, through such suffering, but the expression betrays the conquered anguish, the hardly-won resignation.

The cup of sorrow destined for that fair girl's lips had been indeed full of scalding drops, but they had not burnt away the faith, the love, which filled the heart; they gave her strength to bow her head, and drink in resignation, and the accepted sorrow strengthened her into life and hope again.

In her God she found her comfort, in her son her consolation.

It was into this room, so full of recollections and gifts from foreign lands, that Hugh conducted the Admiral, and leaving him, he went to call his mother.

Admiral Byron, often called "Foul-weather Jack," from the fact of his always encountering

a gale of wind when first starting on his many voyages, knew the room well. Captain Thomas Christian and he had been messmates together, and many of the beautiful objects it contained had been presents from Admiral Byron himself.

Sadly he looked round, recognizing many of the beautiful gifts, all intact and well-preserved, while his friend, the noble heart, the gallant officer, was no more. Nothing strikes so sadly upon our feelings as the freshness, the perfect preservation of material things, when we are mourning the friend to whom they once belonged.

The Admiral, after gazing round for a few seconds, turned to the mantel-piece and looked intently upon the well-recollected portraits of his lamented messmate and his young and lovely wife, whom he remembered also in her youth and beauty. The kind handsome face of Admiral Byron softened as he gazed, and his clear, earnest eyes grew dim.

CHAPTER III

THE ADMIRAL'S RECEPTION.

THE Admiral was still deep in contemplating the touching picture when Ann, gently opened the door, and advancing into the room made a slight reverence, then in fashion; the Admiral turned hastily, and bowing low advanced, and taking her hand raised it to his lips, conducting her kindly to a seat—much overcome himself.

Anne betrayed much emotion, and her old friend said, with great feeling, "Dear madam, I can imagine my visit agitates you, bringing many painful recollections to your heart. Most deeply have I mourned my friend Tom, and his

sad end. Deeply too have I felt for you, sweet lady, in your sorrow and desolation!"

"Had you been in England, dear sir," replied Anne, her voice trembling with sorrow, "you might have saved my dear husband, for dear he still is to me, and you had ever so much influence with him."

"We cannot tell, dear madam, we cannot tell! 'twas God's will—so be it. Let us not dwell upon the irrevocable past. I come to speak of the future—the future for Hugh, your son. A noble, handsome boy! you may well be proud of him, dear madam; you may remember I promised your dear husband I would take him to sea with me, you must recollect, and now Hugh must be ten years of age, methinks?"

"He is, dear sir! I remember your promise. I know it was dear Tom's wish, and heavy as the parting with my boy will be, he shall go with you."

Anne covered her face with her hands; Hugh was all she had now to care for and love on earth! For a few moments the Admiral was silent—his benevolent and expressive face showed the deep sympathy he felt. He knew in her past loneliness and misery the comfort the boy had been to her, and he felt what a grief the separation would be.

"Forgive me, dear sir," said Anne, recovering herself quickly; "do not doubt my willingness to confide my son to you. I shall do so with perfect confidence; but human nature is weak! He is, I think, with a mother's partiality, a noble child, and in your hands he will, with God's blessing, be trained into nobler manhood. I gratefully accept your generous offer."

"Madam, indeed you honour me with a confidence that, God helping me, I will deserve; be assured I will do my best to make Hugh

an honourable man and distinguished officer. I have the command on the West India station, and Hugh shall sail in my own ship now at Spithead. We must use all despatch to get the lad under-weigh, as the squadron will sail very soon."

"Very soon, dear sir? Hugh has to pass his examination first, surely?"

"Of course, my dear madam; that I have arranged for his doing as soon as you can bring him down to Portsmouth, for I depend upon your coming yourself on board the 'Union,' and seeing the home your son will have for the next few years."

"How can I thank you!" said Anne, gratefully pressing the Admiral's hand; "how kindly you have foreseen and arranged everything!"

"Do not thank me, dear lady; your husband was one of my dearest friends, and the least I can do for his memory is to help in any

way his widow and son. And now, if you would pleasure me, stroll with me once more round the old place. I would fain see again the gardens and orchards, if it would not fatigue you."

"On the contrary, dear sir, it will be a vast pleasure to me to show you many improvements since you were here, alas! so many years ago."

So saying, they left the room together, and Anne put on her hood, and they passed through the old porch out into the bright autumn morning. They descended the fine oak avenue under the shade of the magnificent trees that had remained untouched for centuries, until they came to the walk leading to the garden, into which they entered by a small door in the high red brick wall. The garden was very large and old-fashioned; fruit-trees of all kinds were trained upon the walls round—the fruit already in autumnal bloom; the narrow walks

traversing the garden were bordered by a great variety of flowers, the homely favourites of past days: cabbage-roses, marigolds, stocks of all colours, camomiles, sweet-william, with various shrubs, lavender, rosemary, and even myrtle, hiding away beds full of kitchen produce, all in perfect order and neatness, eliciting the Admiral's well-deserved praise; he enjoyed, as sailors do, the bright colours, the scents of the well-remembered, half-forgotten flowers, plucking a rose here and a flower there, and dropping them carelessly, after inhaling and praising their sweetness and beauty. A large quaint, circular well in the middle of the garden won the Admiral's enthusiastic admiration, from the graceful way in which nasturtiums, stonecrop, and ferns covered the sides, while deep red water-lilies bloomed upon the surface of the water, making quite a picture of natural elegance.

They walked slowly through the garden to

the opposite end, where a door opened into the orchard, full indeed of goodly fruit-trees, heavily laden, and stretching away in rows quite half-an-acre.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the Admiral; "this is a splendid sight! No country but England can boast such an orchard! And give me the jolly old English apple! No foreign fruit I ever tasted can afford the mingled feeling of pleasure and pain that an apple does. It recalls my boyhood!"

"Yonder lies the Homestead," said Anne; "would you like to see the Ffrenchs? They can well remember you, and your visit would greatly honour them."

"To be sure, dear madam! I recollect Mistress Ffrench too well not to wish to see her again."

Accordingly they crossed the orchard to a little wooden gate in the hedge, which led directly into the farm-yard, the handsome

old farm-house facing them. All the surrounding buildings which ran round the yard looked in good repair, and satisfied the critical eye of the naval officer.

They stood a few moments watching the creatures in the yard, which was swarming with life; pigs lazily lying in the straw in the sun, the poultry scratching about, and the ducks paddling in and out of the thick, greenish pond in the middle of the yard.

The house was a low stone building, with three pointed gables in the roof; ivy and clematis covered a great portion of the building, the windows peeping cosily out from amidst the green leaves and flowers.

Anne knocked at the door, which was quickly opened by a buxom, comely woman in a mob cap and voluminous kirtle of some flowery material. She curtseyed low upon seeing Anne, saying,

"Glad to see you looking so well, my lady!

please to step in; and you, honoured sir," curtseying again, "will you come in and rest?"

"Well now, Mistress Ffrench!" said the Admiral, laughing, "is it possible you have forgotten me?—the naval officer who a few years ago capsized your household, and received such a scolding from you for chasing a hare right into your house, and following him up with all my dogs?"

"Body o' me, sir! is it possible 'tis Captain —Captain Byron? I mind you now, surely! You're kindly welcome, sir!"

"Well then, give me a hearty shake of the hand, dame, in memory of those merry days." So saying, the Admiral shook hands cordiall with Mistress Ffrench, who glowed with plea sure and pride in so cordial a salute, prayin him to drink a glass of cider while her lady ship rested the while. They accordingl entered the parlour of the farm-house, glad t

be out of the bright sun a little space. The old dame soon appeared with the cider and sweet cake; but Anne declined all refreshment, saying the mid-day meal would soon be ready. Her companion, however, gladly accepted the cider, and evidently enjoyed the draught.

"Mistress Ffrench," said he, gravely, as he put the glass down, "I must inform you I am no longer a captain!"

"No, sir?" interrupted the good woman. "Have you left the service?"

"Nay, my dear old dame! Don't you see the uniform? but it's *embellished!* See the gold lace and additional ornaments, and admire! I'm a full-blown admiral!"

"God bless me! well, think of that!—an admiral! I don't think I ever saw one before!" and the worthy woman curtseyed afresh. "And you look so fresh and well, sir!"

"Ah! I'm glad to hear you say that. I

feared, as you did not know me again, I had withered away since I saw you. How do you keep your good looks? such blooming cheeks? You look younger than ever! Early hours, active habits, lots of sleep, and a quiet conscience,—these are your secrets, eh? and a good husband to boot?"

"Troth, sir! you say the truth. I have all these good things, thank God! My husband is a good man to me! Sorry, indeed, he is away at the market, and cannot have the honour to see you."

"I'm sorry to miss him, too," said the Admiral kindly. "Tell him I am very sorry not to see him; I leave him my best wishes. And now good-day, dame! We must, I think, be hastening home, dear madam," added he to Anne. And so with cordial salutes they took leave of Mistress Ffrench, and retraced their steps to the Manor House.

How well it looked in the mid-day sun, the

picturesque old home! with the deep crimson Virginian creeper, the clematis, and honeysuckle covering so much of the front and old porch, and framing the handsome mullioned windows; the grand old avenue stretching away from the house at least a quarter of a mile, —just a home to cling to and love with the mellowing halo of remembered joy and sorrow overlived!

"Let us rest here awhile," said the Admiral, pointing to a rustic seat under the first broad-spreading oak opposite the porch, "and enjoy the beauty of the scene. I love the old Manor House; it looks to me more beautiful than ever!"

Anne sighed, and they sat down.

"I will tell you," said Anne, "something of the sorrows of the years that have passed over since we sat here, dear friend!"

"Do so if it pain you not too much; it is not curiosity but deep interest that leads me

to ask you of yourself and my dear lost friend, of whose actual fate I know nothing!" said the Admiral feelingly.

CHAPTER IV.

ANNE'S STORY.

"I WILL tell you all," began Anne; "I can bear to do so now, and indeed would wish to unburden my heart to you, for the agony of the trial is past. God has brought me mercifully through that sad, weary time. You were afloat, I knew, far, far away, or I would have turned to you for help, dear sir."

"Which should gladly have been given to you in every possible way."

"I know, I know!" said Anne warmly; "but alas! such comfort I could not have. It is now three years ago that the sad end of all

my earthly happiness came! the previous years since our marriage had been all happy, only chequered by dear Tom's necessary absences with his ships,—no other sorrow but that of the separations his profession compelled ever came near us. He came back from his last voyage in 1753, bringing from China and India innumerable gifts of value and beauty for me and every one of the household; even the Ffrenchs were not forgotten,—sailor-like, a gift for every one! His delight, his happiness in his home and myself, his pride and joy in our sweet child, seemed intense and inexhaustible. Happy as we had ever been before, the past paled in comparison of the fervent joy of our reunion. He occupied himself from morning until night in altering and improving the property, shooting, fishing, and sometimes hunting. Those two years that followed his return home are to me like a blissful dream! no cloud cast the faintest shadow upon our happiness. For-

give me if I dwell long upon them and their memory; they are all I have to treasure in my dear husband's place in my heart. Among the friends who came for shooting were naval officers, who urged Tom to appear again at Court and seek employment: two years of idleness, they averred, was more than enough for any man. Impetuous, ambitious, energetic, as you know he was, I could not be selfish enough to chain him to my side, even with rivets of love's own moulding; and so he went to London, and went to Court. His Majesty was very gracious, he wrote me word, and the prospect of a ship seemed imminent. After a short spell of gaiety he returned, bringing fashionable friends back with him for the autumn shooting.

Those were very merry days, such as you can remember here! Merry suppers of an evening, and tales and songs beguiled the time. But one new habit pained me, and that was the

cards and dice that nightly appeared. Among the guests were men who seemed to me to lead Tom on to gamble; they betted at their games, and large sums were lost, until, indeed, the amusement, as they called it, appeared to me assuming alarming dimensions. I spoke to Tom very earnestly; I besought him to reflect upon what he was doing, and urged his withdrawing from so dangerous a pastime in vain, —he laughed at my fears. The games, indeed, cards and dice, were new to him, and consequently exerted a fascination hitherto unknown. At length he lost seriously, and was himself pained and distressed when I told him that we should be straitened all the winter in consequence.

"'I will go afloat, my darling,' said he soothingly to me, 'very soon, and replace all I have so foolishly lost. It shall not happen again.'

"The shooting over, his friends departed,

greatly to my relief, though among them were one or two I liked much, and who indeed justified my preference in the end. A few more happy days were passed with me alone, and then, he embraced myself and boy tenderly, repeatedly pressing us to his heart, and tore himself away for ever!—we never met again! He promised to avoid all his gambling acquaintances, and speedily press his claim for a ship, and, if unsuccessful, to return home."

Anne paused a few moments, and the Admiral said kindly,

"Do not fatigue yourself, dear madam, by continuing, if you feel it too much for you."

"Nay!" said Anne, "I only shrink from telling the sad end. Dear Tom wrote from London, full of hope, most lovingly to me, told me of the hospitality of his friends, and assured me he had avoided all gambling-houses; still my anxiety was great. I felt he was in the midst of temptation, surrounded by men who

passed their lives among cards and betting, the great vice of the age; and Tom was known to be wealthy. A nameless and terrible fear pressed heavily on my heart. His letters were as frequent as possible; but you know how irregular and uncertain is the post. Ten days passed after the receipt of his last affectionate letter, but I did not feel especially uneasy on that account; when, one afternoon, two gentlemen arrived, and asked to see me, sending in their names, Sir Henry Hoste and Captain Shelley.* Sir Henry was urgent for an immediate interview. My heart seemed to stand still when I heard their names! they had both been our guests in the past autumn. Sir Henry, a truly kind, excellent man, had inspired me with much friendship; but Captain Shelley I disliked and distrusted. As I descended to receive Sir Henry in the withdrawing-room, an icy unutterable feeling of dread

* These names are fictitious, though the recital is true.

crept over my spirits; I trembled so much that I could scarcely turn the handle of the door. How can I forget that moment? As soon as my eyes fell upon Sir Henry's sad face I knew my fate. I rushed at once to him, and caught his arm. 'Sir Henry,' I cried, in my agony, 'is he dead?' His answer was given in an agitated voice, as he led me to a seat and forced me down upon it: 'Compose yourself, dear madam, be comforted. Your husband sent you his blessing—he is no more!' Slowly the bitter truth left his lips! they fell like molten lead upon my heart! What followed I knew not for some time. Margot was summoned, and they gave me restoratives, and brought me back to a life of anguish. Most tenderly, most compassionately did Sir Henry give me, by degrees, the particulars of that sad end, so awful to me in every way! It was in one of those fashionable taverns, with several of his brother officers and friends, and the first and only time poor

Tom had gone in among the gamblers; there he had been cruelly stabbed to death! Sir Henry was himself there, and assured me dear Tom was utterly blameless in the affair. A broil had occurred at the end of some game, and Tom joined in it to defend another, when he saw foul play going on, and the officer overpowered. Tom had been playing himself, had played honourably, had lost heavily, and was leaving the tavern when the row and quarrel began. Captain Shelley, it appeared, had persuaded him to join their gambling table, had played against him and won easily. Won, alas! 'heavily,' said Sir Henry, significantly. My poor husband was borne up to a quiet room above in the house, and greatly had Sir Henry comforted him, in promising to come direct to me and break the heavy news: for me the kind man gathered up the last words, the last deep sobs of repentance and affection for his wife and child, especially his prayers that I would

forgive him. Oh, Admiral!" said Anne, her voice choked with grief, "it was so bitter never to have seen him again! never to have soothed his last moments of pain and remorse, never to have closed his dear eyes, so loving, so true. Indeed, I felt it cost Sir Henry a struggle to witness such sorrow as mine then was. I felt heart-broken! My grief was unutterable—it was despair at the first." Anne paused, too agitated to continue.

"Say no more, dearest madam," said the Admiral, much moved, "you are so agitated you will make yourself ill."

"No! I must finish, and then I need never recur to the sad tale again—the *worst* I have now told you; what followed was full of humiliation, and roused my sinking spirit. After giving me time to rally in some measure, to understand Captain Shelley's demands, Sir Henry said with much embarrassment that one debtor had arrived with him, was indeed

waiting. Would I see him? 'Is it necessary?' said I; 'I will pay all that is owing without any hesitation.' But Sir Henry urged my seeing him. 'You must rouse yourself,' said he firmly, 'to hear the account of his winnings; it is adding much to your trial, and I fear, I fear, you will be *terribly* pained: meet this *lesser* loss, dear madam,' added he, 'in a noble spirit; conquer yourself.' 'I will,' said I, standing up, and seeking for courage to meet my darling husband's tempter. He had led him to his death—he should, indeed, see something of the desolation and anguish he had caused. I did not know then that Captain Shelley was in truth my husband's assassinator, or I could not have borne the intrusion. Such events are, I am told, of frequent occurrence in London, and in the midst of the confusion and scuffle consequent upon such a scene the guilty man generally escapes, and is left for all punishment to the stings of conscience; no other

Nemesis following such deeds! Well! standing up, supporting myself by the back of a chair, I requested that Captain Shelley might be summoned. He looked very pale as he entered the room, and was evidently greatly agitated.

"Commanding myself as best I could, 'Sir,' said I, 'Sir Henry informs me my poor husband expired your debtor; have the goodness to inform me to what amount, and you shall be paid, though methinks it is blood-money you claim.'

"Oh, how well I remember that scene! I felt my manner almost insulting,—my voice sounded harsh and cold as it never seemed before."

"No wonder, no wonder!" ejaculated the Admiral.

"'He did, madam,' was all Captain Shelley replied, and then a pause ensued. I struggled with my agitation, and as he said nothing,

more haughtily demanded, 'To what amount, sir? Pray in this bitter hour spare me any false delicacy; to the uttermost farthing you shall be paid!'

"Captain Shelley doubtless was slightly nettled at the tone in which I spoke, for he now with greater coolness answered me unpityingly, 'His last stake, madam, was the Manor House itself!'

"Thunderstruck, I exclaimed, 'This house! this house, sir! my home! my son's patrimony! impossible! This debt cannot be paid; the Manor is entailed!' I stood proud, panting, breathless.

"'Madam, the estate *is* entailed, I am aware; but this house was built subsequent to the settlement of entail.'

"A terrible pain shot through my heart, a pang beyond all others. The ground seemed breaking up under my feet. How could he, my loved one, stake our home, our only shel-

ter? how could he risk turning us out into the cold world? how could he deprive Hugh? These questions quivered through my mind like lightning flashes! Oh, I felt it so keenly, even into my soul! In spite of every effort to be brave, I staggered with a look of unutterable pain, my eyes sought Sir Henry Hoste. I faltered, 'Is it—can this be true? Is it true?' and I sank down a crushed and broken-hearted woman, covering my face with my hands.

"Sir Henry, who had barely restrained himself all the time, turned fiercely upon Captain Shelley. 'Sir,' said he, 'you see the bitter fruits of your unholy influence upon a man as upright, as admirable and devoted an officer, husband, and father as ever breathed, warped to evil by your damnable persuasion and temptation. Now, have you the heart to claim in justice a debt your superior gambling, of which you were fully aware, won easily from the

novice, my poor friend, in such infamy? . . . You cannot deny what I affirm, sir,—the unscrupulous advantage you took over poor Christian. I blush for an officer holding a commission from His Majesty causing the death of a brother officer, and coming down to pillage the widow! I heard you, I swear,—I heard you suggest that last stake, when Christian said he had no more money. Though you had had the honour of visiting his noble wife here, had seen his child, you coveted their dwelling-house! For shame, sir! Are you a man? Can you not feel——'

"'Enough, enough!' interrupted Captain Shelley; 'spare me your sermons. I can, and do feel for the affliction I see—and which I deeply grieve I have caused,—but with regard to the debt, all that I can or will say is this—keep the Manor House for your life, madam; during that period I will not claim it, nor shall my heir until after your death. Madam, I pray

your forgiveness, if you can grant it to a wretch like myself, and I humbly take my leave.' So saying he bowed hastily and left the room. I cannot describe the relief of his departure, though I had never raised my eyes again upon him; still his very presence seemed to stifle me!'

CHAPTER V.

THE MID-DAY MEAL.

"DEAR madam," said the Admiral most kindly, "it was a cruel trial for you! sad, sad, indeed! I was told in London the Manor House had been gambled away, but that you still lived in it. I could not understand how the first could be, or the latter either. So was it?"

"Yes, so it was! We ascertained the truth that the house, through some neglect, had not been included in theentail; only the homestead was mentioned. Sir Henry Hoste most generously insisted upon Captain Shelley's signing a legal document to the effect of his promise.

But for his kindness, his sympathy and advice," said Anne, gratefully, "I do not think I could have over-lived that weary time of trial and mortification. We offered Captain Shelley any compensation, any sum he chose to name, in lieu of the house, but in vain: and so it stands. Hugh will be lord of the manor, will have the estate and the homestead, and if he ever comes to live here after my death—which probably under these circumstances he will never do, he must turn the farmhouse into a mansion; but he will, I am sure, never do so, never bear to see the old house occupied by strangers. They will not have an inch of ground," she added; "no power over the dear old oaks, that we love so much! Still it seems to take the heart out of the property, and is seldom out of my thoughts. . . . Since then, dear friend, I have gradually rallied from my affliction, through God's help—found comfort in my boy, in the daily round of duties, in the exertions I had to

ıı ake to meet the gambling debts. But I have paid all, dear sir!" said Anne, her eyes sparkling with pride, "every one! and the estate is free again, and brings in a good rent. I can afford to fit out my darling boy with every comfort for the navy, and as he rises in his profession help him on with a good allowance!"

"I cannot sufficiently admire, much more praise adequately, your admirable courage and conduct, dear lady! Alas! my early misguided friend was surely only five-and-thirty years of age! How early lost to his family and his country. May his son, indeed, profit by the sad lesson of his life, and reward you by his steadiness and inflexible principles for your noble self-denying devotion to him!"

"I think, I hope," said Anne, "he will!" a softening expression crossing her fair face as she spoke, contracted, ere now, with pain and bitter remembrance as she told her piteous tale. "He is impetuous, but truthful, courageous,

and tender-hearted. A mother's fondest prayers will follow him, and I believe my God, who has brought me so far, will hear them." And her fine eyes sought the skies to strengthen her faith in their blue depths.

"They will, be assured, they will be heard!" replied the Admiral, warmly; and his frank, kind eyes were moist as he watched the sweet, anxious mother, and felt his interest in the orphan lad much enhanced by the sad position in which he stood.

Anne now rose, saying, "I fear I must have wearied you, kind sir! Let me beg you to enter the house, and I will speedily prepare for our mid-day meal, which will shortly be served, and you must need refreshment."

"I have been too deeply moved and interested to think of anything but yourself, dear madam, and your poor boy."

Thus saying they entered the house, and found Hugh waiting in the hall to conduct the

Admiral to his room. And Anne proceeded upstairs herself to her own quaint but comfortable bedchamber, where she found Margot Jones waiting to attire her beloved mistress, having prepared the black satin robe and lace ruffles, and the lace lappets for the fair hair. In the large mullioned window stood Anne's toilet-table, covered with white quilted satin, rather yellow with age. The mirror, a gift from her lamented husband, of French manufacture, was oval, with a handsome embossed silver frame, standing upright by the help of a silver leg at the back. Various curious and valuable objects covered the table, the spoils of other lands; japanned trays and boxes, red and gold; ivory carved cups, and boxes of curious workmanship in silver and gold; all appropriated for different articles wanted to complete a lady's toilette.

The high bedstead, of handsome carved wood, had a quilted covering of crimson silk

and curtains to match; old tapestry covered the high-backed chairs and long cushioned settle near the fireplace, and upon the high chimney stood many pieces of beautiful china. Treasures they all were to her, the gifts of the loved sailor husband, who never entered a port without seeking tokens of his love for his wife, for whom he thought nothing too valuable or expensive.

Margot, the Welshwoman, was herself no little addition to the quaintness and beauty of the room, for she was quite a picture in herself. Only a couple of years older than her mistress, she was more like a valued friend than a servant, having left her home in North Wales with Anne at the time of the marriage of the latter, and remaining devoted to her service ever since. With true Welsh affection she had clung to her national dress and language. Her fine strong figure looked well indeed in the red petticoat, short blue skirt, and body

with the bright turn-over on her shoulders. The snowy cap, covering much of her black hair, and tied neatly under her comely face, beaming with frank, earnest cordiality—quite the Welsh type of beauty; the square forehead, the brown eyes, large and lustrous; the marked eyebrows, the slightly aquiline nose, the firm sharply-cut mouth and massive chin, added to the brilliant complexion, rendered Margot a handsome specimen of the Welsh race, though by no means a rare one. Many an Oxfordshire farmer had sought to win the beautiful Welshwoman, but in vain. Much pride and intense affection for Anne and her son kept her honest and unselfish heart exclusively attached to them.

When the crushing sorrow of Captain Christian's death came to the Manor House it was Margot who comforted, soothed, and, with strong religious feeling, cheered on to fresh energy and resignation the fainting heart

and drooping spirits of poor Anne,—never ceasing in her efforts to cheer and comfort, until she saw the light return to the eyes she loved, and the faint rose of health to the pale cheeks she watched so tenderly.

With Margot's help, Anne was soon attired in her handsome though simple dress; the bright hair, again combed up over the high cushion, and the little lappet fastened under the chin with a diamond brooch. The ruffles round the throat and arms were very becoming, and Anne looked sweet and elegant as in her portraits.

She was just turning from her toilette-table to descend to the hall when Hugh came rushing in, as was his wont, with a white rose, and the petition that Margot would fasten it in her dress. Anne smiled and kissed her boy; and Margot exclaimed, as she fastened it in Anne's bosom, "Well, indeed! it does look famous!" Then hand in hand the young mother and son descended the broad, hand-

some staircase. A sweet picture they made; and so thought Admiral Byron, as he contemplated their entrance into the hall, where the repast was spread.

A sigh escaped his lips as he advanced to meet them, and, taking Anne's hand, led her to the head of the table, placing her courteously in the high chair placed for her. Then he seated himself opposite to her, and smiling, he beckoned to his seat also the boy, waiting modestly for a sign from him.

"Sit down, my dear Hugh; if you are half as hungry as I am we shall both do honour to the good things my old friend Margot has prepared;" and he nodded kindly to Margot, as she stood with Topaze ready to wait upon them.

Tempting dishes were indeed placed on the table. A deep, round dish contained small river-fish, floating about in a boiling pond; a delicious way of serving them, and still at this day in fashion in Holland. A fine larded

capon, a game pasty, a couple of partridges, with apple pie and custards, sweet cakes and pastry, left nothing, methinks, to be desired. In the middle of the table stood a handsome silver flagon of ale, supported by two chased goblets; and in another large cup was a preparation of cider and spices, with bobbing apple, also placed in the middle to ornament the repast.

The arms of the Christian family were engraved on the flagon and cups; canting arms, consisting of three chalices, divided by a chevron, and a small anchor, an honourable addition, in one corner of the shield,—the crest, a unicorn's head with jewelled collar, with the family motto, *Salus per Christum*, surrounding.

Admiral Byron assisted in carving, and helping his hostess and Hugh, and did full justice to the repast; warning Hugh at the same time that he would not fare sumptuously on board ship. "Often nothing but salt junk and ship biscuit, youngster." But Hugh only

laughed, and said, "He did not mind that." And so with eating and chatting pleasantly the mid-day meal passed over.

Hugh's health was drunk in the first goblet of ale; and with the cider-cup the Admiral prophesied success and distinction for him in his naval career; and with the canary wine and dessert the gallant sailor foretold Hugh would wear the admiral's uniform in early years, like himself. And the mother's heart beat high with hope, while Hugh's cheek crimsoned with joy and firm faith in every word the Admiral said.

It was a happy sight that simple country banquet; the naval officer, cheerful and animated, raising his goblet to pledge the handsome boy, whose deep blue eyes were fixed upon him and sparkling with delight; the happy mother's half sad, half smiling face; the bright sun shining in through the diamond window panes, flashing upon the silver and

coloured bits of china upon the table, catching the bright gloss upon Hugh's flowing curls as he sat with his back to the light, and falling upon the Admiral's gold lace and epaulets, drawing the rays from Anne's diamond locket, and resting fondly upon Margot's red petticoat, blending all, even Topaze's sable complexion and white teeth, into a tableau unique in colouring, homeliness, and beauty. Shortly after the meal was finished the Admiral requested permission to order his carriage, resisting all Anne's entreaties for a longer stay; urging his naval duties and the long journey down to Spithead.

He enjoined speed in the preparations for Hugh's outfit, and promised to send up his uniform with all despatch. He took an affectionate farewell of Anne, Hugh, and even Margot, to whom he gave a special invitation to accompany her mistress on board the "Union," and judge of the sailors' cooking talents.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PREPARATIONS FOR SEA.

ALL the little household watched the kind good man's departure from the porch with regret, and he drove off himself with the happy heart of one who has brought happiness and help to a desolate hearth, and fulfilled a promised duty to a lamented friend.

Anne Christian forthwith began the preparations for Hugh's outfit; in those days, when no machines for sewing had been invented, the stitching and finishing of necessary under-garments, even for a boy of ten years of age, took time; and the necessity for haste fully occupied Anne's mind, diverting her thoughts from the impending parting.

Hugh, meantime, attended by Topaze,

scoured the neighbourhood on pony-back and on foot, to shake hands with his early friends far and near; all bade the fair boy God-speed with regrets, and sometimes a tear or little keepsake, and always with warm wishes for his success. He busied himself also in the orchard, with a feeling of doing so for the last time, and as he heaped up the ruddy apples in the large baskets ready for the cider mill, he speculated as to that future which, to his ardent mind, was all brightness and mellow-hued, like the beautiful fruit he gathered.

The rest of his time during those last days was devoted to his studies,—his spelling, his writing, his arithmetic, history, and especially English history, for which he had a great love. He made the old porch his study,—as Margot said, "Because his uniform, Master Hugh thinks, will arrive in the mail to the front door, though they would not drive his honour the Admiral up to the house!"

To the back door, however, about a fortnight after the departure of the latter, did the much-longed-for uniform arrive, sent over by special messenger from Chipping Norton, with letters from the kind friend to Anne.

Hugh's joy was simply ecstasy when he saw the midshipman's natty costume, with dirk and cap and gold lace band! All must immediately be tried on! Hugh begged his mother to remain in the hall that she might judge of the effect when the uniform was on: and, accompanied by Margot and Topaze, he bounded upstairs to dress. No sooner equipped in full uniform than he flew downstairs three steps at a time, waving his cap and hurrahing wildly, his long curls floating behind, a very butterfly in brilliancy!

"Dear mother," he cried, "is it not splendid! Oh I am so happy! I'll never rest until I am an admiral, and worthy of you!" Thus saying he embraced his mother warmly.

"God bless you, my boy!" said Anne, greatly moved, "and give you health and opportunity, and then I am sure you will become a brave and good officer. Those curls, Margot," she added, turning to her servant, "must be cut off."

"Yes, sure, he's a young officer now!"

And soon they were all cut off, and packed away among other dear and valued relics of Anne's past.

Meantime the Admiral's letters and commands were read. They were as follows: on the Monday following (this being a Saturday) Hugh was to leave home, to pass his examination on Tuesday if possible; the fleet was soon to sail, the necessity of haste great. Admiral Byron reminded Anne of her promise to come down to Portsmouth herself, and deliver Hugh over to his care; and told her not to forget that Margot was to accompany them.

It seemed sudden at last, but all preparations

for Hugh's outfit were now finished, and there was no use in delay. The boy's last day at home would be a Sunday; the last day of close intimacy with his mother would end in calm thought and rest! It would be the seal of his life at home as a child; the last impression should be one of solemn prayer. The Sabbath morning dawned bright and clear, and Hugh watched the sun rise, from his little bed in the room adjoining his mother's, with fluttering eagerness and impatience, like a little bird leaving the nest for the first time.

He had won his mother's consent to his wearing his uniform to church for the benefit and admiration of his rustic friends, though he had absolutely no right, of course, until the ordeal of his examination had been gone through: no fear had his mother but that he would pass. Examinations for the navy in those days were not raised to the exalted standard they have now attained; boys were *not*

expected to be young philosophers,—reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography, with history, all in a moderate degree, were the subjects for examination; and a boy of ten years of age was not expected to be a proficient in even these attainments. Hugh had been educated at the "Chartreuse of London," commonly called the "Charterhouse," where his mother was glad to send him—at that time an admirable college; and doing this enabled her to pay off his father's debts, for which she had to deny herself many luxuries to which she was accustomed. During Hugh's holidays she devoted herself in every way to forward him in his studies: thus he was singularly well educated, and his knowledge of French especially was of great use to him in after life, and this he owed entirely to his mother.

The uniform was accordingly donned, and as the church bells rang out, sounding so sweetly over the intervening wood and meadow as they

came wafted by the breeze to the Manor House, the mother and son sallied forth.

The small old church of Saxon date stood upon a slight hill, and following a little path leading across a field and through a small copse, Anne and her son approached the sacred edifice.

The picturesque churchyard, shaded by fine old yews and elm-trees, in rows, round about, casting deep shadows upon the crumbling dilapidated tombstones, all of the most simple primitive fashion, was already crowded by people from the villages and nearest hamlets round; old women in their old-fashioned hoods, and many with black lace trimmings, heirlooms from their grandmothers; the younger women and girls in the neat spencer of nankin and silk, or stuff, according to their means; the men and boys all neat and clean, and fresh and ruddy looking; intemperance and smoking were still rare in the neighbourhood of Hook

Norton, happily, and consequently the countenances of the men were cheerful and intelligent, and their wives and daughters looked free from care and the weary dejected looks so habitual to the labourer's family in this our nineteenth century!

As Anne and Hugh entered the churchyard through the little gate in the low lodge, all who were resting upon the tombs arose and greeted the Lady of the Manor reverently, with bow and courtesy, making way for her among them as she passed on, with smile, and a kind word for all. Greatly and justly was Anne beloved and respected by all her neighbours; for the poor her purse, her advice, her sympathy, and her ready help were ever sought, and prompt to assist, comfort, and relieve. Hugh's appearance, as he modestly and with flushed face followed, was evidently fully appreciated, though the admiration only found vent in smiles and whispers.

The Vicar, an old man, the Reverend George Dashwood, received Anne and her son cordially at the church door, and escorted them to the raised pew close to the pulpit, which he entered immediately. The congregation followed upon their footsteps with the usual noise and bustle of taking their seats; this soon subsided, silence ensued, and the service began.

The hymns sung were entirely without accompaniment, but all the congregation joined with voice and heart, and with considerable harmony. The concluding short homily suited the occasion of Hugh's last attendance: "Earnest in spirit, serving the Lord." Hugh's deep blue eyes were fixed upon the old clergyman's face, the features he knew so well, for Mr. Dashwood had often kindly assisted Hugh with his Latin, and shown much interest and love for the fatherless boy.

When the service was over Anne waited with her son for the old Vicar's blessing, to

carry with him upon the first venture out into the vortex of life in the busy world. Solemnly, and with much emotion, did the good man lay his hands upon the boy's head and bless him.

"'Fear God, honour the King!' these words, Hugh, comprehend your duty," said he; "keep them in your heart, and God for ever bless you, my dear lad!"

Mr. Dashwood accompanied them out of the porch into the churchyard, where the congregation was waiting for a last look of Hugh.

"Take leave now, my love, of your old friends," said Anne; and Hugh sprang impulsively forward and grasped the hands of the old men and women, anxious to offer him their "fare-wells." Many an old eye was moist and tearful as Hugh, in his bright uniform, and hopeful happy youth, with much affection, bade "God bless them."

It was a touching sight,—the handsome boy, with his warm earnest manner, pressing the

hands of the humble and aged dwellers of the hamlets round; the old people who had seen him carried into church for baptism, and his father before him! and now another member, *the last* of the loved family, was going forth to follow the profession of his fathers: what would be his fate? Many a "Poor lad!" was uttered, many a prayer for a happier fate than his father's, was said. The "good-bye" of the boys and girls Hugh had so often played with of a summer's eve in the hay and cricket fields, in village feast, or "harvest home," was more cheerful and cheering; his uniform openly admired, with cordial wishes for his venture over the sea! Still Hugh felt sad as he left them to rejoin his mother, and looked often back, waving his hat, as he saw his old friends watching him from the old churchyard.

CHAPTER VII.

THE JOURNEY TO PORTSMOUTH.

THE parting from all the well-known inhabitants of the neighbourhood, rich and poor, was over, and Hugh, though too young to understand and explain his own feelings, experienced a dull sense of pain, the first severing of the link connecting childhood and youth, never to be riveted afresh!

The last evening was now come, and Hugh begged his mother to stroll over to the homestead, that he might take leave of the Ffrenchs. Anne willingly agreed, and they walked quietly through the gardens and "dear old orchard," as Hugh called it. Wherever the boy wished

his mother went with him. He seemed to long to carry away a last impression of all he loved so well, and where his childhood had been so happy.

What a blessed privilege is a happy childhood, the joyous recollections of childish fun and games, the varied pleasures of the seasons, as they rolled over, enjoyed to the full; the merry Christmas, with its holly and roast beef and plum pudding! the short Easter holiday, the happy summer vacation, the romps in hay fields, and revels in fruit gardens and orchards, all memories hallowed and interwoven with a remembrance of a sweet and tender mother. None can be too grateful for a collection of such pictures, treasured up in the storehouse of the brain. Hugh's memory was excellent and well exercised, full of such precious recollections: would they not help to keep him from the evil in the world? The farewell to the Ffrench family was cordial and affectionate. The good

old dame kissed Hugh tenderly, and bade him, in homely terms, be worthy his angel-mother, and bring home a lot of prizes, like his father.

"I'll be sure to do that, dame," said Hugh, "and you shall have a good share!"

They returned home by the loved old pond, glowing in the deep red sunset; there lay the little boat, exchanged now for nobler craft, safely moored.

"Topaze may keep it now," said Hugh half sadly, "I shall never care for it again! I am going to a real ship, and toy-work is over."

When they re-entered the house they found the supper ready, and Margot urged retiring early to rest, as at five o'clock the next morning they were to start for Chipping Norton to catch the mail for Portsmouth.

"Nor dim, nor red, like an angel's head, the glorious sun uprist," on the last day of September, 1758, when the little party, Anne, in travelling costume, Hugh, and Margot, partook

of their morning meal of beef and ale, at four o'clock, preparatory to their journey.

It was soon over, and they all mounted the car to convey them away to Chipping Norton. The small knot of servants were standing in the old porch to see the "young master" off, and many a tear was shed; Topaze fairly howled, as only negro boys can; and they finally drove down the avenue, Hugh waving his cap.

It was a long dreary journey to Anne, who had her place inside the coach; but Margot and Hugh upon the top, next the coachman, soon recovered their spirits, enjoying the fast driving, the novelty and bustle of stopping and alighting for food and hour's rest at the curious road-side inns; the sunset, the moonlight brilliancy, all enjoyed, for they travelled day and night, were alike full of pleasure for Margot and Hugh; while the loquacious coachman and the cheery fellow-passengers did their best to wile away the hours to them both.

It was still grey morning when the mail drove noisily into Portsmouth; the horn sounding, the rattle of the wheels upon the uneven pavement, and the cracking of the whip, alone broke the stillness in the narrow streets, all deserted at that ghostly hour, where generally so many rough and rollicking soldiers and sailors were rioting about.

Our travellers alighted at the principal inn, close to the water's edge, with windows to the harbour, looking to Spithead. Rooms had been ordered for them by Admiral Byron, and the landlady bustling out received them with much respect and attention, gazing with some amazement upon Margot in her Welsh costume, the hat especially filling her with astonishment. Margot even remarked it, exclaiming, "Well, indeed, did ye never see a Welshwoman with a hat before?"

Annē knew both the inn and the rooms, for she had often travelled down both to see

her husband off, and to wait for his return, after his long absence with his ships. Taking therefore Hugh by the hand she led him to the window, saying, "Look at the sea, my boy; it is your first sight of the great ocean: may God bless your course upon it! There lies the Admiral's ship, out yonder."

Hugh gazed intently; several vessels lay in the offing, the Admiral's broad pennant was conspicuous.

"How grand it all looks, mother!" he exclaimed as he leant on the window, gazing out; "how beautiful! how large the ships are! how I long to go on board!"

A substantial breakfast was prepared, and after partaking of it the weary travellers gladly sought their beds for a few hours' sleep, ere Admiral Byron arrived.

It was nearly mid-day when Anne and her son reappeared in their cheerful sitting-room, refreshed by sleep and a change of attire.

Hugh, longing for the examination to be over, sat anxiously looking out towards the sea, watching for Admiral Byron; who, however, was already on shore, and entered the room unannounced about twelve o'clock, greatly to Anne's and Hugh's delight.

After the usual compliments and inquiries about their journey, etc., etc., he said he would take Hugh at once to the dockyard to pass his examination, adding, "When that is over, as I hope it will be shortly, I will return and carry you off on board: you have brought my friend Margot, I trust!"

"I am here, sir!" said Margot, curtseying, and coming forward.

"That's right, hat and all!" said the Admiral, smiling; "we shall soon return: come along, my boy," and bowing to Anne he left the room, followed by Hugh.

An anxious couple of hours followed, which Anne and Margot passed in sundry specula-

tions upon the result of the examination, exchanging hopes and fears, set at rest at last by the welcome sound of Hugh's pattering hurried footsteps up the stairs; another second, and bursting open the door he rushed up to his mother, exclaiming, as he threw his arms round her, "I have passed so well, dear mother! and the Admirals are coming to see you. I may put on my uniform for good; come, Margot:" so saying, away he ran, Margot hastily following him.

Admiral Byron meantime arrived, and told Anne the boy had passed *admirably*, answering all questions, in writing and verbally, with readiness, and such intelligence, that he won much praise from Sir Samuel Hood and the other officers. Anne was much gratified and thankful, especially as the Admiral added, "Your devotion to your son has already borne fruit, dear madam, you see! Sir Samuel Hood and other old friends of your husband and

yourself, wished to pay you their respects; but I told them two bells had already rung, and we must be off on board. Will you forgive me for hurrying you?"

In a short time they were all descending to the boat, Anne in her black satin hood and wimple, and Hugh and Margot in high spirits, both now in brilliant costume, eliciting, as they passed through the streets, many murmured remarks upon the brightness and beauty of the ladies, from the groups of idle sailors standing about. Very soon they were comfortably seated in the Admiral's boat, the men pulling as seamen can, with the regular dip in the water, and the regular thud against the rowlocks, and soon the boat was out of the harbour. The "Union," a fine seventy-four, lay at anchor midway between the harbour and Spithead; but it was very calm and most enjoyable, all the country party thought.

To Hugh the row was full of delight: it was

his first trial of a real boat; he had found one large enough to "go aboard of," and his boyish dreams seemed realized; his spirits rose high, and his heart was bounding with joy and hope. The placid sea, so beautiful and green in its depths, the warm bright sun and blue clear sky, with the gallant ship lying so still and graceful, seemed to Anne's heart to foretell happy days full of success for her sailor-boy. The oars were now thrown up and arranged on either side of the boat, the hooks out, the boat secured alongside, and with a little difficulty our friends were soon upon the quarter-deck.

The Admiral presented his Captain and officers to Mrs. Christian, who had a kind word and graceful greeting for all, and then she begged to be introduced also to the midshipmen on board, her son's future companions; they were immediately called up, a merry hearty-looking knot of boys of different ages. Anne

said, with her sweet and winning manner, "My young son joins your ship to-day: may I ask you to receive him kindly? His father was a sailor also, and methinks he ought to find friends in you all." They responded heartily to her appeal, and coming forward to Hugh offered their hands, bidding him roughly but heartily welcome. Hugh, who for the first time in his life felt shy, warmed into friendship very soon with their cordiality.

"Now, my dear madam," said the Admiral, "we can leave your son with his messmates, and I must take you down to dinner. Captain Shuldham, to your care I consign Mistress Margot there; please to bring her down carefully also:" thus saying, he led Anne down to the cabin, where a handsome repast was awaiting them.

Margot, full of admiration of all she saw, gratefully accepted Captain Shuldham's help. The latter was immensely taken with the hand-

some Welshwoman, and rather astounded her by inquiring from what country she hailed; and when she replied, "From Wales, sir!" further amused her by inquiring *where* the country was, which sent forth such handsome women,—if it was a "new world?"

"A new world, sir? Well, indeed, you must know 'Wales was Wales before England was born!'" at which old Welsh saying the gallant officer laughed very heartily.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON BOARD SHIP.

GREATLY to the regret of the kind Admiral and Captain Shuldham, Margot firmly though respectfully declined to sit down at the table with them and her mistress. With a stately courtesy she accepted a glass of canary wine and a biscuit, and was allowed to withdraw into the Admiral's own cabin, where at night his cot was hung; there she was left gazing out on the sea, serene in her Welsh pride, which with Margot consisted greatly in adding dignity to her mistress's station and position.

Two other officers were invited to join the dinner-table, and Mrs. Christian won their admiration by her gentle beauty and grace,

added to the charm of her conversation, which she exerted to the utmost to win their "sweet voices" and interest for her son.

Healths were drunk, and the Admiral and officers united in heartily assuring Mrs. Christian of their wishes for Hugh's success, and promises of "looking after" him: for what sailor can resist a pretty woman's pleading eyes, especially if they are handsome?

After dinner was over Anne returned upon deck with the Admiral: Captain Shuldham at his own request remaining to superintend Margot's dinner. He amused himself in piling up her plate, and watching her eating, joking with her in sailor fashion upon all subjects. When at length he led her again upon deck and rejoined Mrs. Christian, he informed the latter he had gained a vast insight into the manners of the unknown Welsh race.

"They are not unknown to me, Captain Shuldham," said Anne, laughing; "for I am

"also a Welshwoman, and very proud of our descent, I assure you;" upon which the gallant officer made a profound bow, and professed himself more anxious than ever to explore the Principality.

Hugh meantime had been taken care of by the middies, which meant teazed, quizzed, and his temper and spirit tried in every imaginable way; happily the boy bore all with good temper and courage, and reappeared upon deck, much tumbled, dirty, with flushed face, but still undaunted-looking, his eyes as bright as ever, and he whispered to his mother the surname his messmates had given him of "Taffy," christening him rather roughly by throwing a glass of salt water over him. Anne smiled, and reminded him he must expect a good deal of banter and teazing, and must give and take in good humour. "Never mind being called 'Taffy;' you may be proud of your Welsh blood, my boy, it will stand you in

good stead in the day of trial: you remember your old French proverb, 'Vieux sang ne manque pas!'"

The Admiral now ordered tea for "the ladies," and it was served round to them in small china cups without handles. Margot frankly confessed she preferred milk alone.

"Ah," said Captain Shuldham to her, "you'll enjoy your tea by-and-bye, when this youngster brings you back a chest from China, and cups and saucers with red dragons upon them, like your dress. I'll choose them for you."

"Well, indeed, I may like it better then," said Margot, thanking Hugh beforehand for his promised gifts.

Already was the evening drawing on, when Anne at length with great reluctance said, "We must leave you now, my dear Admiral, thanking you very cordially for your hospitality; it has been a happy, happy day for us all, and especially for me. I will take it as an

omen of coming good for Hugh, who I hope you will allow to return for this night to me. I leave, you know, by the early mail to-morrow morning."

"Certainly, my sweet friend," said the Admiral, with great kindness, as he pressed her hand. "Shuldham, order the boat, and I know you will gladly escort the ladies on shore for me. I have so many letters still to finish before we sail, the day after to-morrow, that I must pray your forgiveness if I remain on board, and take my leave of you now, dear madam. Your welcome visit has conferred a temporary grace and honour upon my ship, I assure you, which has cheered us all up; and I in my turn must thank you for your goodness in coming on board." To Margot also he added, "We don't ever see such bright eyes in foreign lands, Margot."

And so, amid parting words and many handshakes liberally bestowed even by Anne, with

her quiet dignity, and endless pleasant smiles from Margot, who won the hearts of old and young on board, they descended the ship's side into the boat. After landing, Captain Shuldham politely gave Anne his arm, escorting her to the door of their inn, and bade them all a fair good-night.

Hugh was now once more alone with his beloved mother—the glitter, the novelty, the hope and joy of the dawning future, shut out from sight by the closing day; he drew close to her whose love had hitherto been his sole resource in any trouble, and throwing his arms round her burst into tears; the parting struck chill upon his heart.

"Oh, mother," he exclaimed, "I like it all! and Captain Shuldham and the mids., though they are so rough, and the beautiful ship, and the grand sea; but how can I bear to leave you—not to have you to tell all I feel to? I shall be so alone in the world!"

Bravely had Anne borne up all day, and with calm dignity had restrained all outward expression of her feelings; but now, like Hugh, the excitement, the necessity of restraint over, she broke down as her son's tears burst forth; passionately she kissed her child, passionately she pressed him in her arms, pressing kisses to his eyes, his lips, while tears from her own sweet eyes rained upon his face. It was a few moments of utter abandonment to grief—the grief of parting with one's only comfort; it was nature's expression of pain in the separation of mother and child. Alas! is anything harder to bear than separation? We do not look upon it as a calamity or dispensation from God, and bow our heads in faith; but rather as a cold necessity of human life, and therefore while nature is shuddering we try and bear it, as the common lot of all, and are half-ashamed of our intensity of feeling. The girl who parts with her lover for his term of service abroad, either

as sailor or soldier; the father who parts with his son, the mother with her child—all suffer, and suffer unutterably; but seldom complain, or meet with sympathy, or even seek it; it is a matter of ordinary occurrence in the routine of life, and excites no surprise, *only pain*.

For a widow the separation from an only child must necessarily be more bitter. Hugh was all Anne had left to occupy her heart; he had filled up the blank her loved husband's loss left; he had been her sole companion, her pride, her comfort, her second self. She felt the light would go out now for her in the dear old home. During his absence how slowly and sadly would the years pass,—in what monotonous gloom! No more glad holidays; no more merry Christmas games in the old hall! It was a bitter trial truly.

After a little time of indulged grief Anne was herself again; she talked calmly and soothingly to her son. For the first time she

told him, as he sat at her feet, the sad circumstances of his father's death. She besought him ever to remember he was called upon to wash out in noble conduct and deeds of valour the stain of gambling left upon his name. "Let your dear father's weakness in yielding to temptation be a warning to you, my dearest Hugh. Let no trifling with what is wrong lead you astray; your father was no habitual gambler; the infatuation for cards and dice began in play, and simple little games; only a few months ere he was led, through them, into scenes where his life was forfeited; so is it with all temptation to evil; never yield one inch to any pleasure if you know it dangerous, if you do you are lost; sin will gradually sweep over your heart, and make you a slave to the degradation, the slavery of vice. Recollect, my boy, your heart is your altar: often in life men cannot *kneel* to pray, but the short prayer morning and night never omit on that account; it will

be heard equally well, and will be your safeguard from temptation and bring you back, I pray God, safely to me. Remember your sin, your shame, would kill your mother, who lives but for her son."

"I will, mother: I swear I'll never gamble. I'll never forget all you say—I'll be a good man, so help me God!"

That night, ere Anne slept, she stole into her son's room and watched the sleeping boy. A deep crimson flush glowed upon his cheek, and a lingering teardrop showed the past mental struggle, up to the instant that sleep conquered his youthful sorrow. Anne lightly kissed off the precious drop, and wished it might ever be given to her as easily to chase away each touch of grief from her child: then she turned, and *shut away* in her memory the picture (and it was a beautiful one) of her sleeping son, with a prayer to Him who watches over the sparrows, to shield her boy from falling.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DREAM.

THE next morning broke clear and fine, and the coach starting at five o'clock from the inn at Portsmouth, little time remained after the early breakfast for a hasty embrace between mother and son, which was indeed all the better; and Anne and Margot were stepping into the mail, when Captain Shuldham suddenly appeared, affirming he had come to learn the Welsh for "God bless you!" Anne and Hugh laughed, as Margot said the words slowly for him, "Yr Arglwydd a Fyddo gyda chwi!" at his vain attempts to catch the accent, and they drove off as he raised his hat, shouting the last

words with his best imitation, sounding like "te duckey!" Hugh, though tears were in his eyes, laughed immensely. "Zounds, youngster, what a language!" said Captain Shuldham, "what a lingo! Are all the Welshwomen as handsome as your sweet mother and her maid? And do they really talk together in that barbarous accent?"

"I really don't know, sir," said Hugh; "my mother and Margot often speak Welsh together; but it sounds rather different to your accent."

"Well, that's likely enough! I don't think I have the gift of tongues. And now you must come off with me; I thought it would cheer your good mother to see me ready to take you in charge, and I'll be a friend to you, my boy, as long as you deserve it!" and the kind man patted Hugh on the head.

The latter warmly thanked Captain Shuldham, and accompanied him on board the "Union,"

which sailed in a couple of days for the West Indies. In Hugh's letters to his mother, Captain Shuldham's kindness was especially mentioned, and many messages were sent by him, to both his mother and the handsome Margot.

To poor Anne the homeward journey was long and weary, the hours seemed indeed leaden-winged; but Margot, travelling outside of the coach, soon regained her spirits; the bright weather, the talkative fellow-passengers, soon chased away the sadness she felt, when the gallant Captain's waving hat and Hugh's boyish form disappeared from sight, as the mail drove rapidly away.

"All things come to an end," and Chipping Norton was reached at last. Margot felt pained as she helped her mistress to alight from the coach,—she looked so white, so unutterably sad; her own cheerfulness seemed tacitly rebuked. Most tenderly did she wrap the mantles round Anne, as the latter

seated herself in the old car, awaiting their arrival. She bade her mistress softly "take heart." The sun was sinking low, and the oaks casting long shadows, as they drove up the fine avenue; slanting rays of light were falling upon the well-known nooks and corners of the Manor House, upon the well-known shrubs round about. The Virginian creeper looked a deeper crimson in the sunset glow, the Ayrshire roses still bloomed in autumn beauty round the old windows, the trees were already in brilliant tints; colour, light, and beauty seemed breathing everywhere; inanimate nature had draped herself in harmonious and brilliant robes, to welcome and gladden the saddened mother's heart. Alas! to her tearful eyes one figure was wanting, one loved face, the sound of the childish welcoming voice, the touch of a vanished hand! To her there seemed no life in the glory of the setting sun, no warmth in the evening air, no loveliness as

she was wont to see in the poetry of the sweet old home scenes she knew so well; she only seemed to feel that to her

"Soul was wanting there!"

Her son's cheering voice, his childish affectionate embrace, hitherto always welcomed home his loved mother, even after short absences, either visiting in the neighbourhood or upon business. The old porch struck chill upon her feelings, for there stood Topaze alone! only the old cook and maidens of the household were there; pleased indeed to see their loved mistress back; and Anne sadly shrank from questions after her boy, and their warm welcome!

Margot, with the innate tact and courtesy of a Welshwoman, hastily led her mistress upstairs, saying to them, "Well, indeed, the dear mistress is quite dead with travelling day and night. She must go upstairs at once to rest; you have the fire

burning and the supper ready!" And so smiling and chatting she led Anne up to her bed-chamber, where a bright wood fire was glowing and crackling on the hearth; she seated her poor mistress on the low settle, and speedily relieved her of her wraps, hood, and mantles; and pressing her to her bosom she exclaimed, with true sympathy and love, "Annoul! annoul! (my darling) it is bitter sure! Yr Arglwydd ach eysuro chwi" (God comfort thee)! She rapidly prepared warm cordials and refreshment, and the gentle warmth, the food for the body, and sympathy for the heart, soothed the depressed frame, and Anne gazed thoughtfully into the wood fire, as she revived, and soon found herself castle-building with the circling flames for her sailor-boy.

Margot descended to her own supper, and poured out all the proceedings of the few days of their absence:—the journey, the dirty town of Portsmouth, the sea, the ships, the dinner

on board, all were graphically described, and filled the simple hearers with amazement. It was already quite dark, save for the firelight, when she returned to Anne, bringing in a lamp which she placed upon the table, rejoicing to see her mistress looking once again serene and refreshed.

Anne rose up, and telling Margot she felt much better, sat down to the table to write in her diary, as her habit was, the events of the last few days. She detailed therein how she had parted with her only beloved child, leaving him in the care of his father's friend, Admiral Byron; how she had even visited his nautical home for some years to come, seen his officers and messmates; and many other details of her visit to Portsmouth; and then she finished by expressing something of the blank she felt, having nothing now to look forward to,—no more holidays, no more such joyous breaks in the monotony of her life;

but "God's will be done!" if only her son might be blessed in his career, and made prosperous and worthy his name! Then she prayed for comfort for her own desolate heart.

This task finished, she called Margot, and with her help soon prepared for rest, weary indeed. Margot extinguished the lamp when her mistress was in bed, stirred up the dying fire, drew the curtains round, tucked in the handsome quilt, and wishing her dear mistress affectionately good-night, she softly closed the door, taking up her own quarters that night and henceforth in Hugh's little room, falling peacefully asleep very shortly in his old bed.

Not so Anne! sleep, though she felt so weary, appeared "affrighted" from her eyes. The old hall clock struck the midnight hours as usual, but not as usual upon drowsy ears; her wakeful eyes caught the faint early streaks of dawn stealing in through the window curtains ere "nature's soft nurse" succeeded in hushing

her spirit into rest, and "steeping her senses in forgetfulness," nay, not forgetfulness, far from that—over the sad heart stole a vision shall we call it? that "gave her spirit strength to sweep adown the gulf of time!" Once more was she in a boat rowing to Spithead; but the scene was widely different. A high sea was running, the wind tremendous, dashing the white-crested waves against the sides of the ships. An innumerable fleet covered the sea, large line-of-battle ships were rolling heavily; frigates, brigs, and endless transports, impossible to number; red uniforms appeared on the decks amid the blue jackets; the movement, the bustle on board the vessels, appeared very great. The sun shone brightly over the vast fleet, and played prominently upon the Admiral's broad pennant, floating out and flapping in the high wind. A magnificent man-of-war of ninety-eight guns it was, whose mast bore the noble flag, and standing in the gangway, con-

spicuous by his uniform and the red ribbon of an order across his breast, was the Commander-in-Chief. He appeared intently watching Anne's approach in the little boat, tossing and battling with the waves; with eagerness she sought to recognise his features beneath his cocked hat; and lo! they were Hugh's! they were her son's! No longer the boyish round face; bronzed, manly, grave; still they were the same deep blue eyes, the sweet firm mouth, the frank earnest manner, the calm countenance—she knew him instantly! The boy grown into manhood, the slight form only of middle height, just what Hugh promised to become! Even in sleep she seemed to feel the ecstasy of that moment, the pride, the joy, the thankfulness to God, for such an answer to her prayers! Standing out, gleaming in the sunlight, she saw upon the massive stern of the ship the name of the vessel, "The Glory." She clasped her hands in amazed happiness, a storm of tears and sobs of joy burst

from her eyes and heart. The violence of her emotion awoke Anne from the happy dream; tears were still streaming down her face, but the light of joy was in her eyes, and the flush of happiness on her cheek.

Margot had been some time standing by the bedside, unwilling to awaken the evidently happy dreamer, silent and astonished at such evidence of emotion. Now, however, as Anne opened her eyes, she exclaimed, "Indeed you have been dreaming a splendid dream this long time, dear my lady, your pillow even is wet: what has been foretold to you?"

"Margot!" said Anne, sitting up and pushing back the long curly hair from her forehead with both hands, and trying to recal the details of her blessed vision: "Listen, Margot. I dreamt I was again in a boat rowing to Spithead, and there was a grand fleet, innumerable in number, and transports, and soldiers,—thousands, thousands; and it blew, oh! such a gale of wind;

and I saw the Admiral's ship, I saw his broad pennant, I saw *him*, the Commander-in-Chief, and he was my own Hugh! Yes, Margot," and Anne's voice trembled, "I saw my own boy, his dear blue eyes, his sweet face, oldened, grave, paler, just what he will grow into, standing on the deck of a magnificent man-of-war, in the uniform of an admiral, with a ribbon, an order, Margot, across his breast! God grant it may all come true! I saw the ship's name clearly; it was 'The Glory,' 'The Glory,'" and Anne covered her face with her hands and sobbed in awe and joy.

"Glory, indeed, Ofna Dduw (fear God), it will all come true, sure, mistress dear!" and she bowed her head upon her clasped hands, with all the superstition of the Celtic races.

Greatly comforted with this wonderful and remarkable dream did Anne arise, and faithfully wrote all the particulars of her dream in her diary, the only record of the prophetic

vision that remained when its fulfilment came; for Anne died when her son was only a commander; and more singular is the fact, that at the time of the dream there was in the English navy no ship called "The Glory;" it was subsequently taken from the French, and when captured bore the name of "La Gloire."

CHAPTER X.

HUGH'S NAVAL CAREER AND LOVE STORY.

HUGH'S career from the time of his entering the navy was one in which his conduct, his courage, ability, and intelligence won universal praise: he made friends of his messmates and patrons of his superior officers.

He passed for lieutenant on the 8th June, 1767, in less than ten years after entering the service. Few and short were his visits to his beloved mother; but when he did rejoin her, great, great was the happiness! innumerable the tokens of affection brought from the West Indies for all; Margot and the Ffrenchs came in for their share, and the pretty withdrawing-

room bid fair in time to become a perfect museum of curiosities. In his progress towards manhood and success in his profession, Anne found her comfort, and his constant letters in absence were a vast source of pleasure.

Hugh was present at the siege of Pondicherry, at the capture of Manilla and St. Eustatia, and frequently wounded slightly. In 1774 he was Lieutenant on board the Marlborough, seventy-four guns, commanded by Sir Samuel Hood, who showed him much kindness. In 1775 Hugh was acting-commander in a sloop of war; and while lying off Yarmouth in the Isle of Wight he first fell in love. He was at this time about twenty-seven, and hitherto had escaped all attacks of the tender passion. Two circumstances had availed to preserve him from the usual sailor fashion of a "love in every port:" first, the refinement and superiority of his mother had rendered him unusually fastidious; and secondly, he

had been constantly in sea-going ships, and had seldom remained any time in harbour.

The day was Sunday, and Hugh, rowing ashore, attended service in the little church at Yarmouth. He was standing outside when a car drove up, the old-fashioned car, like his mother's, with the door opening in the middle of the back, with seats on either side. It contained a fine-looking old gentleman and a young girl. The former was driving, and Hugh heard him say, "Get down now, Anne!" Immediately Hugh advanced and opened the door, assisting the young lady to alight. She thanked him in a low sweet voice, and the old gentleman also said, "Thankee, sir," and drove off to put up the carriage. Hugh remained with the young girl, who he had already remarked was very handsome, though her large slouching hat and the mass of black curls concealed much of her face.

As she stood waiting for her father's return,

Hugh entered into conversation, asking her if they had driven far, and various other trifling questions; and she in her turn, seeing him in full uniform, asked him if he were in command of the sloop lying in the offing.

"Yes," replied Hugh, "and I wish you would do me the honour of visiting her; she is worth seeing, I assure you, a very neat handy little vessel."

"I should like it of all things," replied Anne, blushing, "if papa or my brother would take me off."

At this moment the old gentleman returned, and in a kind and frank way he offered his hand to Hugh, who had raised his cap, saying, "Always glad to see sailors, sir. Probably you know our neighbour Captain Andrew Hamond, now afloat."

"O yes, sir!" said Hugh, "I have long had that honour, having met him upon the Leeward Island station."

"Ah! well, you must come and see us at my place, Thorleigh, and I'll give you some shooting. And now we must go in; the bell is down." With this he hastened away with his daughter, who curtseyed ceremoniously to Hugh, with a smile and a blush, as she followed her father.

Hugh entered the church quickly also, and was shown into a pew close to that of his new acquaintances; and we fear his devotions were much disturbed in drawing a comparison between his mother and the fair wearer of that simple white dress, with the blue sash and odious hat, as he mentally called it, which hid away a face he longed to see more of. However the ice had been rapidly broken, and he had been invited to her father's, and registered a vow he would very soon profit by the hospitality offered. He listened to hear the same sweet voice joining in the hymns, and gradually he seemed to breathe something of the atmosphere of home, as he watched the

quiet reverence and simplicity with which all joined in the service. When at length it concluded, Hugh followed the old gentleman and his daughter out of the church, and assisted the latter into the car; when, after repeated invitations from his new friends, and an assurance that "Anne" would also be glad to see him, they drove off. Hugh re-entered the church and walked up to the altar, where the old sexton was covering up the faded red cushions, and asked him the name of the family who had just left.

"That's Squoire Leigh, sir, of Thorleigh, and Miss Anne, poor young motherless lady! She don't come often; she's mostly with her grandfather, the old Lord Holmes, in Newport."

"And they live near here, do they?" asked Hugh.

"Yes, sure, at Thorleigh, about two miles off. Mabbee you'll like to see the monument of the Squoire's relation, Sir Robert Holmes?"

"What, the Admiral?" exclaimed Hugh; for every sailor had heard of Sir Robert Holmes's exploits and daring bravery at sea.

"Yes, yes! the Admiral surely;" and leading the way the old sexton showed Hugh a strange figure in marble, standing erect in a kind of recess in one corner of the church, surrounded by rails.

Hugh gazed with astonishment at the figure. 'Twas indeed the gallant Admiral's *head*, but the figure was that of the French king, Louis the Fourteenth!

"Why, man," said he, "what on earth is the history of this figure? It is the most ludicrous monument I ever beheld!"

"Troth, 'twas a strange whim of Sir Robert. You see, sir, he took a prize ship, and aboard of her was this here figure, with a round uncut block of marble for a head; so the Admiral he gets a painter kind of man, and he cuts out the features, till the head's as like the Admiral

as two peas! barring it's all white, for I'm an old man now, and I remember Sir Robert was ruddy enough! Well, there he stands! leastways his head! 'Twas intended, they said, for some French king, and the ship as Sir Robert took was bringing it from Italy."

"What a history!" said Hugh, laughing. "The Admiral has left many records of his eccentric but gallant naval actions, but nothing that I have ever heard of comes up to this! Are there no monuments of the Leigh family here?"

"No, sir; their vaults be all at Godhill and in Shorwell Church. Splendid monuments, sir! Figures of the old knights a-kneeling up, and all painted. If you had a mind for a walk, 'tis no distance much to Shorwell!"

"Well, perhaps I'll go some day." So saying, Hugh gave the old man a trifle, and left the church, carrying with him a vivid remembrance of the sweet girl he had met, and

wondering when they should see each other again.

On board his sloop there was not much to divert his thoughts, waiting as they were doing for certain stores and orders to carry out to Admiral Young, the Commander-in-Chief on the Leeward Island station. Restlessly Hugh paced the deck, and planned a visit to Thorleigh and another interview with the fair Anne Leigh. At length his impatience could not be longer restrained, and on the Tuesday following that memorable Sunday, he "girded up his loins," and went ashore, determined to find his way to the "Squoire's." He soon ascertained his road, and with beating heart he set out, leaving the quiet little town of Yarmouth behind him.

It was August, and the harvest had begun. The whole country round seemed alive with busy peasants and huge waggons carrying the corn. Laughter and merriment sounded

from the surrounding golden fields. Hugh had a heart to feel all the beauty and gladness around him. He enjoyed the shade of the deep leaves, for the sun was very powerful; the hedges were full of wild-briar roses and honeysuckle. He felt strongly the loveliness of nature on this bright harvest morning. The feeling busy at his heart clothed all with gladness from his own buoyant spirits; and as he advanced further and further into the country, which, with the same autumn colouring and beauty in all, recalled his happy childhood, a feeling of hope and peaceful happiness crept over his heart.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FAIR ANNE LEIGH.

AS he walked joyously on he felt more and more certain that the young Anne Leigh was mysteriously dear to him; her name was the same as his mother's; like his sweet mother's was her gentle voice and manner; he half confessed to himself he loved her already. Our nineteenth century is indeed a "drab age;" falling in love at first sight is almost unheard of. Simple tastes, simple pleasures, country amusements, nature in her calm beauty, are all despised, and love is no longer the same passion as in the past century.

Then a young man's fancy was caught by the gentleness, the modesty of the country beauty, his heart won by the purity and earnestness of the wearer of the simple white muslin dress and coloured ribbon. *Now*, in 1872, extreme of fashion, false tresses, pearl powder and rouge, and a boisterous unfeminine style of manner and slang address attract and fascinate the *blasé* men of the world. Are mothers like Anne Christian no longer among us to train and restrain their girls? or is it the strange fusion of classes that we now see, the admission of the rich middle class, the millionaires of yesterday, into the ramifications of the aristocracy? Does this bring the admixture that tinges all society with vulgarity, coarseness, and slang? For others the subtle question.

We will follow Hugh, who with the freshness of a character free from all early dissipation, free also from the satiety resulting from the gratification of every passion, had quickly

lost his heart to one who he felt instinctively was equal to his beloved mother (the standard of excellence in his estimation) in refinement and character. He never asked if she had money; no sordid ideas filled his mind. Her family was one of the oldest and most respected in the Isle of Wight; he cared for nothing else, believing, as many do, in the old saying, "Noblesse oblige," in the principle, in the purity of heart, handed down by a long line of ancestors. Lightly he walked on, past many a substantial farm-house and snug cottage; admiring the lovely children playing in the little flowery gardens, and smilingly returned the bows and courtesies bestowed by all he met upon the handsome young officer in his smart naval uniform.

From the brow of a slight hill he cast back his eyes over the wooded tract he had passed through, and caught again a sight of the blue sea and his own little sloop lying in the offing.

Looking forward, or still beyond, he saw the old mansion he was seeking, showing its manifold gables and peaked roofs, snugly surrounded by fine trees, sheltering it round from the east winds, which are so keen in that part of the island, that strangers frequently remark the singular "horizontal oaks" that are but the victims of the keen east wind. Cheered by the sight of the object of his walk, he rapidly descended the hill and passed through the lodge gate, with some of the old trepidation returning to his heart. As he approached the house he observed long tables placed under the shade of fine spreading trees, covered with table-cloths, and heaped up with substantial food. Maid-servants were busy adding the necessary plates, and mugs, and knives and forks for the evening banquet, and a young girl in a flowery chintz dress and little cap over her black hair, looped up with a coloured ribbon, was also assisting them.

Hugh recognised Anne immediately, and a painful shyness seized him. As Schiller says,—

"Wie ein Gebild aus Himmel's Höhn,
Mit Züchtigen, virschämten Wangen,
Sieht er die jungfrau vor sich stehen!
Da faszt ein namenloses sehnen
Des Jünglings Herz." . . . . .

For a few moments he stood irresolute, himself unseen; then shaking himself free from so boyish a feeling (as he mentally called it) he advanced to the tables. Anne saw him first, and an exclamation of surprise escaped her. Then, as she recognised her new friend, a deep blush glowed on her handsome face. Putting down her basket, however, she hastily advanced to meet him, and with a low courtesy she said, "You are most welcome, sir; my father will be much pleased to see you, and more so if you will join our harvest supper."

"That I will, with pleasure," said Hugh, as he took her hand, and with the fashion to which he was accustomed raised it respectfully to his

lips. "I hope you will allow me to help you in your occupation; I assure you I am quite accustomed to harvest festivities."

"Are you really, sir?" asked Anne, laughing a little incredulously.

"Troth! sweet Mistress Anne, I am, though," said Hugh. "I lived in the country before I went to sea, and have had many a merry harvest-home at my mother's, I assure you."

"Nay, then," replied Anne, "you are doubly welcome, and can perhaps help me in making the cider-cup ready, and the jugs of spiced ale; it would help me vastly. My brothers are all in the fields, and there are none but the two maids left, and they are but ignorant lasses."

Hugh was only too charmed to be of use, and asking leave to take off his uniform coat, he set to work, in and out of the kitchen and cellar, with such a will that soon the numerous jugs were brimming, to Anne's delight.

When all was ready Anne insisted upon

Hugh's sitting down and partaking of some refreshment after his walk and kind exertions, which they did together, side by side at the long table, and they merrily pledged each other in the rustic cups, Anne approving immensely of Hugh's admirable decoctions.

"Now," at last said Anne, "it waxes late, and I must dress, and you, sir, must rest, for after supper we shall all dance there under the old oak; the village band is coming—the piper, and flute, and drum."

"Then you'll promise me your hand, won't you, sweet Anne? You'll dance with me?"

"Indeed I will, sir!" said Anne, smiling. "After all you've done you deserve some reward. Now will you come in?" And so saying she led Hugh into the library, where, as Anne added, he could amuse himself with books during her absence. "They are but heavy, weary reading, though," she added, as she pointed to huge folios upon classical subjects.

"Show me where your Shakespeare stands," said Hugh, "and then I'll not grow tired of my own company."

"Shakespeare? Ah, those volumes are smaller, and though I've read but 'Hamlet' and 'Macbeth,' I like them much!"

"We will read them together some day, Mistress Anne; I know his plays mostly by heart."

"Is it possible you are so learned?" asked Anne, as she smilingly ran off.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HARVEST SUPPER AND DANCE.

LEFT to himself in the old library, Hugh looked round the sombre room with curiosity. The old portraits and carved woodwork of the chimney-piece reminded him of home, his dear old home! He felt little inclination to take down the dusky volumes upon the surrounding high shelves, or even Shakespeare; and throwing himself into a chair he gave himself up to a reverie, in which his beloved mother, sweet Mistress Anne Leigh, and marriage, and a happy little home of his own, were all blended in romantic thought; and so pleasing were these happy hopes and fears that they lulled him to sleep, during which his bright

castle-building continued uninterruptedly, until the sound of distant shouts, and songs with chorus of voices, startled Hugh from his light slumber. Springing up he hastily looked out from the open window, and soon discovered the joyous singers.

Approaching the house, their work done, were groups of men and women. Foremost walked the old Squire himself, surrounded by young men who bore the stamp of birth, albeit they were in their shirt-sleeves, and their attire altogether showed traces of having borne a prominent part in that day's labour.

It was already evening, a glorious harvest evening. The sun was sinking low and crimsoning all the horizon round; the intense heat was past; a refreshing breeze came, blowing perfumes from the flowers and shrubs round the house. While Hugh stood watching the approaching company, a light form emerged from the shrubberies and glided rapidly away

towards them. It was Anne, attired in her white muslin and lace tippet, light and fresh and graceful. As soon as she reached her father she embraced him affectionately, and gave her hand, and sometimes her cheek, to the stalwart young men by whom she was surrounded. Hugh involuntarily turned to leave the room. A jealous feeling prompted him to go and meet them at once, determining they should not have Anne all to themselves.

The fine, handsome old Squire raised his cap as Hugh approached, and said very cordially, "You have come at a most happy moment, young sir, to join our rustic festivities. You are heartily welcome!" So saying he shook Hugh warmly by the hand, adding, "These are all my sons and nephews,—all Leighs, sir. This, Barnabas Leigh, of Northcourt!"

They all came forward and shook hands, when Anne said, "And, father, Captain

Christian has made all the cider-cup, and prepared the spiced ale for you all!"

"Well, we shall enjoy it the more for the naval flavour! But indeed we must in, and wash away the traces of our hard work. Anne, my child, you must entertain the Captain the while."

So saying they all entered the house to prepare for the supper, the labourers having already dispersed to the back for the same purpose. Hugh and Anne sat down upon the rustic bench at the front entrance, and the former remarked with some joy that the rose he had given her was fastened among her abundant black tresses.

"The rose becomes you well, Mistress Anne! 'tis not so bright, though, as your cheeks!" Anne gave Hugh a little tap with her large old-fashioned fan. "Fie, sir! sailors, I thought, never paid empty compliments! Is not my fan," continued she, "a great beauty? My grand-

mother gave it to me; it came from France, and you see by the date, 1670, was painted a century ago." Hugh took the fan and examined it—it was really both rare and beatiful. Anne was called away by her father, and during her short absence, Hugh slyly wrote in it in French with his pencil—

"J'aime Mademoiselle Anne,

and when she returned, presented it to her again, with a mere remark upon its value, and beauty.

Two carriages now drove up full of young ladies. "There are my cousins," said Anne, rising eagerly to greet them,—"Mistress Kitty and Margaret Leigh, and Maggie and Mary and Annie Rushworth; they always come for our dance."

Hugh assisted the young ladies to dismount, and was formally introduced to them all; they were most fashionably attired, more so than simple Anne, with short sleeves and ruffles,

and looped-up dresses, and ribbons and long buff gloves on their arms; still Hugh only admired the simplicity of Anne's dress the more. The cousins were buxom handsome young country belles, full of health and joyous spirits.

Soon all the gentlemen reappeared, and a warm welcome was given to the fresh arrivals, and chatting and laughing went on until all the labourers filed round the house, quietly and respectfully, with clean hands and faces, ready for supper. The Squire immediately went amongst them, and bade them sit round, placing each man until the table was full; then he led the remaining few to the second table, and seated them at the bottom; after which he advanced to the high-backed arm-chair, placed at the head of the table, and said, "Now, boys, bring the girls; Captain Christian, will you honour my daughter with your arm, and place yourself here on my right

hand?" an order Hugh gladly obeyed, though he saw a quick look of annoyance in Barnabas Leigh's handsome eyes.

All were soon arranged comfortably round the handsome board, and then the Squire, taking off his cap, said a short and simple grace, after which they all sat down and the supper began in earnest! All, even the young sons and nephews of the house, had worked hard from sunrise to sunset, taking only such hurried refreshment as they could have in the fields. The harvest was over.

"All was safely gathered in,
Ere the winter storms begin,"

had been the burthen of the song, as they walked home in the evening.

Anne and her lady cousins shortly rose, to carry round the jugs of spiced ale, and filled up the mugs and glasses with kind words and smiles; and Hugh's handiwork, both in the manufacture of the ale and cider

cup, was greatly approved. The men asked to drink the Squire's health, which they did most heartily, touching each other's cups and mugs, and shouting, "The good Squire: God bless him!" After a few words of thanks for their good wishes and steady work in the harvest fields, Mr. Leigh rose, and the bountiful repast was finished.

The village band now appeared, consisting of a blind man with a flute, the schoolmaster with a fiddle, and his two sons with another fiddle and big drum. Anne made them all take some refreshment, and then stationed them by the old wide-spreading oak, beneath which there was a smooth piece of turf, as soft and smooth as carpet of satin. The labourers' wives and daughters appearing, the ball was opened by Mistress Anne, whose hand was seized without any permission sought or given,—that Hugh, watching with jealous eyes, saw,—by her cousin, the handsome Barnabas. He led

her into the centre of the greensward, and the fiddlers striking up a slow and solemn air, they danced a kind of country minuet, every one standing round and looking on with admiration.

Hugh felt somewhat mollified as he knew his own inability to perform in so intricate a movement, and therefore contented himself by admiring the modesty and grace with which Anne performed the various turns, and twists, and courtesies. The old Squire's arm-chair was placed ready for him, and seated in it among the spectators, he enjoyed the praises bestowed upon his fair daughter. The minuet finished, Anne and her partner were loudly applauded; Barnabas led his cousin a little out of the crowd, and Hugh's eager eyes watched a little pantomime, the words of which he guessed through their gestures. Barnabas evidently wanted the rose in Anne's hair, for he pointed to it, and he saw her shake her head, and put up her hand to prevent his touching it, and then

she turned and looked all round, as though she were seeking the donor; at all events, so Hugh interpreted her looks, and hastily joining her, he said, "Mistress Anne, I claim your promise for the next dance! it will be one we sailors can accomplish, I hope!"

"It will be Sir Roger de Coverley, sir! can you dance it?" said Anne smiling.

"Any fool can dance that, I think!" said Barnabas, a little contemptuously.

"Oh! I am fool enough, then, for that, Mistress Anne, if you'll give me your hand!" laughed Hugh good-humouredly. Anne's smiles were his, he felt sure, and so he led her among the dancers, and up and down and round and round they went, Hugh dancing as gaily and well as any of them, and feeling very happy, though the dance admitted of no intimate conversation with his partner; still, it was very pleasant, all dancing merrily, the music, big drum and all, never flagging, nor

the dancers showing any signs of fatigue. Country dance after country dance did Anne and Hugh enjoy together; no remarks, no opposition made. Barnabas, piqued, flirted and laughed and danced away with pretty Maggie Rushworth, leaving Anne to her own devices. When fairly exhausted, Hugh led Anne away, nothing loth, through the shrubberies unperceived. They seated themselves upon the rustic seats, and Hugh as he sank down exclaimed, "By Jove, I'm tired! since I've been afloat I've but seldom danced, and am out of practice."

"Oh! but you dance so well! so joyously, sir!"

"It makes me happy you think so, sweet Anne; I have enjoyed myself better than I have done for years," said Hugh with a sigh; "but I must away now! I have a long walk back to Yarmouth, and then to row off to my ship!"

"Oh! but you must stay for our midnight

'sup and bite,' and why can you not sleep here? My father expects you to do so, dear sir."

"Nay, I cannot do that, fair lady! you forget my responsibility. I might be ordered off at daylight to-morrow!"

"Might you, really?" said Anne, looking sad.

"Would it grieve you, Anne? would you care if you heard I were gone, had sailed for three or four years?"

"Yes, it would!" said Anne frankly, with deepening colour and tearful eyes, "it would."

"Dear Anne! is it really so? You make me too happy. Can you—could you love me? or has your handsome cousin, Barnabas, won your heart?" and Hugh took her hand.

"Nay, I do *not* love Barny, except just as my cousin. I know dear father wishes me to marry him, but I——" and Anne hesitated.

"Do you? say it out, sweet Anne: do you prefer me?" and Hugh's voice trembled with

excitement. Anne nodded her pretty head, and smiled.

"Anne, dear Anne, I'll return to-morrow, and ask your father for your hand. I have not your cousin's broad acres, nor his noble mansion, but I have enough to make you happy!" So saying, his arm found its way round her slight form, and he stole his first kiss from her lips.

Anne Leigh, as she disrobed that night, after Hugh's declaration of love, and was furling and unfurling her fan, discovered with beating heart Hugh's pencilled lines "J'aime Mademoiselle Anne," and repeatedly pressed her lips to the words, ere she put her treasured fan away.

CHAPTER XIII.

HUGH'S MARRIAGE.

AFTER a hurried farewell to Mr. Leigh, Hugh left Thorleigh, the hospitable Squire bidding him return soon, as he could not remain the night.

How beautiful the harvest moon shone! never had the "sun of the sleepless" appeared more bright and beautiful! All things take their colour from our own hearts; and Hugh's was bounding with pride and joy. He had won his bride, and secured a daughter his own sweet mother would fondly love; all was silvered over with moonbeams! The road seemed far pleasanter and shorter than in the morning,

and speedily he reached the coast, whence he could hail his little sloop; his shout was quickly heard, and a boat put off to take him aboard.

We need not linger long over Hugh's courtship. The old Squire was at first rather startled, and a trifle disappointed; he had wished to see his daughter mistress of the fair mansion of Northcourt, and the happy wife of Barnabas Leigh; but, he said, the lass must have her way, and the love of an honourable smart young sailor was an honour, a boon no girl could despise; and so it was soon settled, and Hugh wrote to his mother as follows:—

"My dearly-loved Mother,

"You will be surprised at the news I have to send you. Hitherto your love has filled my heart; now I have another to share your place in it.

"I love Anne Leigh, the daughter of the old Squire I have mentioned to you; she is young,

and fair, and sweet, and as good and pure as she is lovely.

"Her father has given his consent to our union. Dear mother, will you love her as your daughter, and bless us on our marriage? Your sanction, your approval, and blessing, are all I want to make me the happiest of men.

"Sweet Anne Leigh bears your name, and will, I am sure, emulate you in all your virtues. Tell Margot to wish me joy.

"Your ever-dutiful and loving Son,

"HUGH CHRISTIAN."

Written from Thorleigh House,
August 12th, 1775.

The answer from his much-loved mother came as soon as the uncertain post of those days could bring it, and was as follows:—

"MY DEAREST SON,

"Your letter has filled me with surprise and joy! but the latter feeling predomi-

nates. I already love the sweet girl you have chosen, and whose name will recal your fond old mother, who thanks God that He has given you another tie to life, and another incentive to noble and generous conduct.

"Most earnestly do I pray God's blessing upon your marriage, and warmly will I welcome the wife of your choice and heart.

"You will bring her, will you not, my Hugh, to me, when once she is your bride? Her birth and breeding are all I could wish for you, my dear boy.

"Margot kisses your hands with joy.

"Your loving mother,

"ANNE CHRISTIAN."

Written from Hooknorton Manor,
August 10*th*, 1775.

Hugh's happiness was now complete, and as soon as the letter reached him, he hurried over to Thorleigh to show it to the Squire, and win his and Anne's consent to their early union; for, as

he averred, his stay was uncertain, and he could get leave to take his bride to Hooknorton, if the marriage was shortly concluded. Mr. Leigh was both pleased and gratified by Anne Christian's letter, and gave his consent willingly. Anne's was not difficult to obtain, and so it was finally fixed for the end of August. Hugh had no cause for complaint: "a little month," and he had seen and won his bride! This was in true sailor-style of siege and conquest.

Hugh was in a position to make a good settlement, and though only acting-commander, was a young officer full of merit, and already distinguished, and so the course of their love *did* run smooth. There were no delays; the marriage took place in Newport. Anne was with her grandfather and grandmother, Lord and Lady Holmes—with whom she had spent so much of her life since her mother's death; and thither came the brother

and cousins, to enliven the wedding. Margaret and Kitty Leigh accompanied the fair bride to the altar, as she was led up on her father's arm; and Barnabas was best man, though he looked rather rueful sometimes.

The gay wedding breakfast was at Lord Holmes's; and, after healths and all the usual formalities, the happy bridegroom carried his blushing bride to Yarmouth, where they embarked in the little sloop of war, and sailed over to Lymington, whence they posted to Hooknorton.

The tender, loving mother, Anne Christian, was much changed during the twenty years that had rolled slowly over her since we first saw her in her store-room. The fair brown hair was much silvered over, and the airy lace lappet exchanged for the graceful covering of folds of net and point, which allowed the hair upon the forehead only to be seen. The sweet face was much paler;

and there were anxious lines across the brow, which had been faintly seen in earlier years, after the first great grief of her life, but had deepened sadly after Hugh's departure from her side. The eyes were yet undimmed—bright and beautiful—and the smile as winning as ever; her form was much slighter, shadowy even in her white and black dress; always elegant and cared for, still Anne was a lovely woman; though her health had sadly declined, and her spirits and strength decreased with the loss of the joy and prop of her life—the son for whom she had borne up in all her anguish.

Daily she felt more and more weary—weary even into her soul. Hugh now would feel no blank were she taken from earth! Her "course was finished." She had "kept the faith." The glorious woman's mission—to "suffer and be strong"—had been, indeed, fulfilled in her life. In her heart were the whispered words, "Lord,

now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace."

Still, a joyous welcome should the old manor give the happy pair on their arrival. And Margot and Topaze had unlimited permission for the festivities and arrangements on the occasion.

Tables were spread by the side of the old avenue in front of the house; fruit and flowers Anne culled herself to grace the viands. The tenantry, the farmers round, and old friends and neighbours, were all bidden to the wedding feast.

The old Vicar, Mr. Dashwood, came most willingly, bringing his old love and interest in the boy, he had blessed on his first entry into his naval career. He was an old—old man now, verging upon eighty, but hale and hearty still—the comfort of all around him, always the true friend, the guide of youth, the Christian support of the aged, the beloved of all.

The morning of the "day of days" for Hook-

norton, broke bright and clear. Margot and Topaze arranged all with unwearying energy.

As mid-day approached, Anne stood almost trembling with excitement in the old porch, with the Vicar and other intimate friends, awaiting the arrival of her loved son and his bride.

Happy groups of men and women, of girls and boys, filled the avenue, all heads turned to the lodge. At length a shout was heard, and taken up by all—echoed to the house—hats off, and handkerchiefs waved merrily, as the car drove rapidly on. Hugh was standing up, with his hat in his hand, smiling, and bowing his handsome head right and left. As his eyes caught his mother he sprang lightly to the ground, and in an instant was in her arms. Another moment, and he turned, and lifting his wife from the car, presented her to his mother. The younger Anne sank down on her knees, much overcome, as she tried to kiss

the hands held out to her. "Not so, my love," said Anne Christian, "Here—on my heart, my daughter!"

It was a moment of happiness, that touched the edge of pain. A silence followed during this embrace, which all watched with moistened eyes. The old Vicar grasped Hugh's hand, exclaiming, in a voice full of emotion, "God bless you both, my dear Hugh!"

Then followed the bride's presentation to her new friends and acquaintances. Upon Hugh's arm she walked down the avenue among them, and warmly did she respond to their good wishes. Margot and Topaze came in for many kind and winning words; and she won all by her simple, earnest manner, her unaffected beauty and condescension. Margot especially admired her black eyes and raven tresses, which she pronounced "real Welsh."

The mid-day banquets, in the old Hall and out under the old oaks, were merry indeed.

We can leave them to the imagination of the reader. We will only mention that Anne, the bride, prayed to carry round the cider and ale, and fill up the mugs and glasses, as she was wont to do, upon any gathering of her father's tenantry or friends, winning thus golden opinions of her kindness and condescension. Two happy days of affectionate intercourse followed the first meeting, and then, loaded with gifts, Anne and Hugh sadly tore themselves away from the sweet mother. No longer leave could be obtained for our young officer. Partings are ever sad, but this last separation seemed to even Hugh, in the midst of his bridegroom joy, unusually bitter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DEATH-BED.

HUGH, upon his marriage day being settled, had, by the advice of his wife's relations, taken a small cottage called Clatterford, under the ruins of the beautiful old Castle of Carisbrooke, only two miles from Newport, so that Anne would be near her relations during his absence. He had furnished it prettily, and the beautiful gifts they brought with them from Hooknorton added immensely to the elegance of the little rooms.

Anne was charmed with her cottage-home, promising herself great improvements in the flower garden, and lovely walks round the old

Castle. But alas! the improvement of the garden, the evening walks upon the ramparts, round the moat,—the toil up to the keep, and down the uneven and steep stone steps in descending, were soon left to her alone. The summons came, and the sloop was ordered with despatches to the Leeward Island station. Hugh was desired to sail immediately. Scarcely a month had they been married, when the separation came for an indefinite period. Hugh arranged all for his wife's comfort, and leaving her under the care of her relations, he left her sad but full of courage for her solitary life, until his return, as became a sailor's bride.

While on the Leeward Island station, he met again Captain Andrew Hamond, whose home was in the Isle of Wight, and this circumstance gave him an additional interest in Hugh Christian. Having been entrusted by Lord Howe, Commander-in-Chief in America,

with the command of a squadron of frigates sent on a cruise, and having put into Antigua, Captain Hamond was there informed that a considerable number of the hired armed ships, laden with provisions for the army in America, had, instead of going direct to New York, been cruising about among the islands all the winter; and knowing the necessity of their early arrival to the army, and being satisfied of the zeal and activity of Hugh Christian, obtained permission from the admiral on the Leeward Island station, to send him round to collect the victuallers, and hurry them on to New York.

Hugh gladly undertook the charge, and speedily collected the vessels, and with great firmness and despatch conveyed them direct to their destination, and this in so short a time, and with such despatch and ability, that his conduct in the affair gained Lord Howe's openly-expressed approbation; and in proof of

his recognition of this service, Lord Howe took Lieutenant Christian on board his own ship with himself, and, in the course of the year, promoted him to the rank of Commander, his first appointment being to the "Kingfisher." Hugh Christian remained all his life a great favourite of Lord Howe's; in proof of which is the following letter, written years after the above event, by Lord Howe to Captain Christian, who, as Post-Captain, accepted a command under his lordship.

"Grafton Street,
"11*th April*, 1791.

"DEAR SIR,

"Not having a suitable opportunity when I had the pleasure of seeing you at Porter's Lodge, to make my acknowledgments for your obliging readiness again to forego the possession of an independent charge, to indulge me with the benefit of your assistance, I take this

occasion to assure you I am most sensible of it. I have not yet heard that any extensive addition to the present armament is intended; and all the requisite steps having been taken for the most satisfactory conduct of it wherever it is destined, I have no reason to imagine any necessity for your declining to accept of the employment suggested for you by Lord Chatham in favour of

"Your much obliged and faithful servant,

"HOWE."

While under the command of Lord Howe, Hugh was suddenly ordered home in the "Vigilant" sloop of war, of 20 guns, intrusted with despatches for the Admiral at Portsmouth. It was again August, one year since his marriage; none will wonder at the alacrity with which the young commander, husband, and father, obeyed an order, which would give him an opportunity of meeting those so dear to him again.

Upon his arrival at Spithead, while the anchor was lowering, Hugh hastily ordered the boat to go ashore immediately, to deliver his despatches, and obtain leave to cross to the Isle of Wight, clasp his young wife to his heart, and gaze upon his stranger child.

While busy collecting his papers, an officer came down to his cabin, and informed him that the Admiralty gig was coming off, evidently rowing for the "Vigilant," with all speed. Hugh ran upon deck, raised his spy-glass, and recognised his old friend, now Admiral Shuldham, in the boat; the men were pulling hard, he saw, with a look of haste; a presentiment of evil blanched his cheek: "what could they be coming off for?"

Eagerly he met his friend in the gangway, saying anxiously, "No bad news, I hope, Admiral?" as he grasped the Admiral's hand.

"Hugh, my boy, I have bad news!"

"Oh God! my wife? my child?"

"No, they are well; 'tis your dear mother, Hugh!"

"My mother?" and Hugh grew pale and trembling. "My dear mother? Oh Admiral, say she is not dead!—not dying!" asked Hugh, passionately seizing the Admiral's arm.

"Calm yourself, Hugh—she is *not* dead, I hope, but she lingers, I fear, only to bless you! Lose no time in vain regrets. I came off to fetch you—to take charge of your despatches. I have got your leave, everything is settled; collect a few things and come off at once."

"I will, I will!" said Hugh. "How kind of you, dear sir! The evening mail—can I save it?"

"I have stopped it for you; hasten now, my dear boy."

With trembling hands, Hugh hurriedly threw a few clothes into a bag, and then descended the ship's side with his friend, and they were soon ashore.

Hugh was half stunned—he had not thought of his mother; his anxiety was for his young wife, his longing for his child; bitterly his heart seemed to upbraid him; and now, with sudden reaction, he felt the tender mother, the early friend, and guide of his youth and life, was even dearer, dearest of all to him!

As he sat upon the top of the mail, driving rapidly away, he gazed fixedly without seeing anything into the dusky evening, and out later into the dark night, his thoughts full of his mother—his wife and child seemed to have vanished as by some enchanted touch from his mind. His thoughts went back to his early days, his glad holidays, his joys, his transient griefs, all shared, all soothed, by her, now on her bed of death! He covered his face with his hands, and so remained for hours.

When he looked up 'twas dawn again! His countenance was pale and careworn; he urged the coachman to speed, and by promises

shortened the usual long delays at each resting-place; and the mail drove up to the Hooknorton Lodge, at his urgent request.

With trembling lips Hugh asked of the old keeper, "Am I in time?"

"Yes! yes! dear master!" answered the old man: "thank God you're come! She's half in heaven!" added he, with tears.

Up the avenue tore Hugh, faster and faster, until he almost fell into the open arms of poor Margot, as she stood by her mistress's orders watching and listening for his arrival.

"O! Deoch a' Dduw!" (thank God!) exclaimed Margot with tearful joy, as she embraced the young officer she had nursed as a boy; "the dear lady waits to bless you!"

"Waits to bless me?" asked Hugh in a broken voice; "is there no hope?"

Margot shook her head sadly, and led the way at once upstairs to Anne's well-known chamber, where now lay the one great love of

his life, pale, emaciated, dying! Margot advanced, signing to Hugh to remain behind. He heard his mother's exhausted voice asking, "Any signs of my boy yet, Margot?"

"Yes, yes! dear lady, he comes!"

"He comes!" exclaimed Anne, trying to raise herself, "my God, I thank Thee!"

Hugh came as calmly as he could round the curtained bed, and sank upon his knees; as he threw his arms round the mother, so tenderly loved, words failed him, only sobs broke from his heart, as he pressed her cheek to his own.

"My boy! my boy!" said Anne softly, as a look of ineffable peace and happiness came over her face, lighting up the eyes; "do not sob so; I am happy now I have you! Let me look at you, my Hugh!" Her feeble hands turned his face to hers; but his eyes were dim and full of hot tears, and his lips quivered with grief. Once more were her loving kisses upon his eyes and trembling lips. "My poor boy!

be comforted! for me to die is gain. My life is very lonely here, and you have your wife and your child, my dearest Hugh, to fill your heart."

"Yes! yes!" said Hugh; "but you are my first, my earliest love. Oh, mother, must you die? such partings are bitter!"

"Alas! I have but lingered to see you, my child, to bless you; to tell you I have loved you to the end!" and then Anne sank exhausted back upon her pillow. Margot came and administered a few drops of cordial, and Hugh turned from the bed with a passion of tears. Anne slept awhile, and Margot watched, sitting still and quiet by the bedside. Hugh rested after his burst of sorrow upon the long settle, with his eyes fixed upon his loved mother's face.

Suddenly she cried, "Margot, I want Hugh." Her voice sounded stronger. Margot rose, giving her place to Hugh, who hastily threw

off his "uniform" coat, saying, "Take my coat; the epaulets and lace might hurt her." He saw with surprise how much refreshed his mother was looking; tenderly he put his arm round her, saying, "Dearest mother, you are better!"

"Yes, my darling boy, and I am thankful; I want to hear of yourself and your profession, and have much to tell you also."

"Oh, mother," said Hugh, "Lord Howe has confirmed me as Commander, and he paid me many compliments upon my conduct and execution of his commission in conducting the victuallers to New York. He sent me home now with despatches, out of kindness."

"How thankful I am, my dear son! may you ever keep and deserve his good opinion! Do your duty at all risks, and a blessing must follow. I shall not live to see my dream fulfilled, but I doubt it not; it will surely come to pass." Hugh smiled, but only kissed her

tenderly: he knew the dream by heart; but he had not her implicit faith. Then Anne gave him her last commands, her orders for the disposal of the furniture, enjoining that much should be kept for his own home: all removed immediately to the homestead. "Let them have nothing but the bare walls," said Anne, mournfully, remembering the claim upon it. "And Margot must ever live with your wife,—my faithful, true friend," said Anne, warmly, as she held out her hand to the old servant.

"She shall, dear mother, be assured; we will ever love and cherish her as you have done!"—and so the long, long, hopeless night passed; and Margot came back with warm tea, and insisted upon Hugh's taking some, for hitherto no refreshment had passed his lips.

As the pale cold dawn stole into the room, Hugh anxiously watched his dear mother's

face. Alas! alas! death's seal was there! The dark shadows round the eyes, once so bright and beautiful; the pallor, the blue cold look over the features, the drooping lids, the fixed expression, the transparent, feeble hands which he held in his own, all told him plainly how near must be the angel of death! She spoke not—but he heard her laboured breath —he felt the firm grasp of her hand; he kept back with difficulty the wild cry of bitter sorrow that filled his heart! He felt too surely she was passing away!—the stillness, the silence, weighed upon him.

* * * * *

"Hugh!" suddenly whispered his mother, "raise me up again!" Softly did he wind his arm round her slight form, and with her head resting upon his shoulder, she sat for some time.

"Does it ease you, dearest mother?" Hugh

asked, as he wiped the damp death-drops from her brow, with the soft kerchief Margot gave him—the latter standing calm and silent and watchful by his side. Anne answered feebly, "Yes, my love; it will not be long now! I am sinking fast, my darling son; God bless and keep you, and give you health and prosperity. I send my blessing to Anne. . . . . I bless you too, my faithful dear Margot;" and she held out her hands to the latter, who covered them with tears and kisses; "you will live with my son, and nurse his children . . . . Ah!" and a spasm of pain convulsed her for a few moments. . . . .

"My own mother!" said Hugh, in helpless bitter anguish. . . . .

"Hark! hark!" exclaimed Anne, suddenly, trying to raise herself higher; and a gleam of light and hope beamed in her eyes, and flushed the pale cheek . . . "I hear; I hear——the heavenly strains; hark!" She appeared to

listen . . . then another spasm of pain crossed her features, and she lay inanimate in her son's arms . . . . A sigh was all that followed, and Anne Christian's earthly life was over—the heavenly one begun.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FUNERAL.

AN hour or more passed, and still Hugh held his mother. He would not stir; no entreaties of Margot prevailed upon him to give up the loved burden in his arms; he could not believe his mother was no more,—not until Margot bade him feel how cold already was that loved face; and then the touch sent a thrill of agony through his heart. Resigning his place to Margot, his grief burst out, and he rushed from the room.

We will not linger over it . . . Margot found him utterly exhausted on one of the chairs in the old hall, and with Topaze's help,

they bore him upstairs; and the latter soon prepared him for bed. Once laid softly down, he sank into an exhausted slumber; and "death and his brother sleep" re-united apparently for a time the sweet mother and loving son.

* * * * *

Margot, with Hugh's help, punctually carried out all Anne Christian's injunctions—the latter obtaining permission from the Admiralty to remain at Hooknorton until the funeral was over.

There was happily much to be done and settled, regarding both the loved old Manor House, which it wrung Hugh's heart to surrender, and the estate; so that little time remained for unavailing regrets; and it made the resignation of all he loved at Hooknorton easier, and brought him courage in the active measures necessary to bear the inevitable.

The intervening weary days between the death scene and the last service in its crowning sadness, Hugh lived with his kind old friend, Mr. Dashwood, at the Rectory, to whom he was as a son; and who assisted and supported him in all by his warm sympathy and advice.

The last day came at length, and Hugh

> "Bent him o'er the dead,
> Before Decay's effacing fingers
> Had swept the lines where beauty lingers,
> And marked the mild angelic air,
> The rapture of repose that's there,
> The fixed yet tender traits that streak
> The languor of that placid cheek."

No words of ours could better express the calm, soft loveliness, even in her grave-clothes, of the sweet mother he had loved so deeply; but for the cold hue of death, the awful stillness, he could have fancied she but slept.

Alas! on earth no expression, no feeling, will animate those sweet features again; the

soul has left its fair, frail tenement for ever! Tenderly had Margot decked her mistress for the last narrow bed: the close frilled cap, the soft white robe, with black ribbons round neck and wrists; the lovely hands crossed on her breast pressed the small silver cross upon her heart. Roses, rosemary, and bright crimson leaves filled up the spaces round the coffin. We sympathise with those who pay all love and honour to the fair covering, that veils from our closer sight the pure holy soul recalled to its heavenly home. Lay it gently in the earth, as a favourite garment in the wardrobe of the faithful—the churchyard! Ere Hugh left the room, he once again renewed the vow of his childhood in the presence of that inanimate form, to bear himself bravely in the battle of life; steadily to strive to "serve God and his king." Then he pressed his lips a last, last time upon that marble cheek, and hastily left the room and the house, that he might not

hear the awful sound of those harrowing nails, which shut away for ever, our dead from our sight.

The funeral was most simple; the bier, with the light burden, was carried on loving shoulders to the last resting-place; all whom the sweet lady had benefited in life, sought to have a share in this honour: slowly the little procession wound up the slight ascent to the churchyard, full to overflowing with the humble neighbours round, weeping and mourning with subdued, almost silent sorrow, "for the poor young son's sake."

Hugh followed upon Mr. Dashwood's arm, and bore up manfully. There was no other of kin near: an only son, an only grandson, on both father's and mother's sides, was Hugh. Once only he lost his self-control. As they prepared to lower the coffin into the grave, the sun, veiled hitherto in clouds, shone out, and a ray of brilliant light shot into the depths

below, preceding the descending coffin.* Hugh involuntarily started, and seized the Vicar's arm, exclaiming, "Did you see that?" A murmured "Yes" burst from all lips. All had seen it, awestruck. 'Twas but a lightning flash, and again the sun was lost in clouds; but the comfort remained upon all hearts—"the kindly light" seemed to lead even down into the silent grave, as though Faith illumined even the body's resting-place!

* * * * *

All was now over. Margot folded Hugh in her strong arms, pressing him to her true, devoted heart, and bade him farewell. She was to follow to the Isle of Wight with Topaze, now a tall, fine young man, as simple, as demonstrative, as of old, clinging with wild love to Hugh more than ever, now his "dear Missy Lady was an Angel!"

* This is a fact, as are all the strange events in the Memoir.

As Hugh travelled back to Portsmouth, the thought of his wife and child greatly comforted him. He was not alone in the great world. God had mercifully given him fresh ties, and they permitted no blank in his heart.

Such is the gracious provision of our life on earth. The love in childhood and youth for parents, and brother and sister, is perfected in after years in the new tenderness for wife and child. Happy, indeed, are they for whom this merciful law of nature is early and speedily developed, so that when the first deep affections are uprooted by death, the seedlings of fresh-sown love may have strength and vigour to fill up the heart. After reporting himself at the Admiralty, where he met with much sympathy and kindness—for the sweet widow had been well known and universally respected and admired in the navy, so that all felt for Hugh—he readily obtained leave to go to his wife and child in the Isle of Wight.

We need not follow him to his cottage home. None are so ignorant of human feeling as to think our feeble pen can describe the joy, the sacred happiness of that meeting; the ecstacy of again clasping his bride-wife to his heart; his gaze on his lovely infant, his own first-born, already three months old, and now seen for the first time! Suffice it to say, that ere his leave had expired he felt calmed and comforted; and with fresh energy and spirits, he received Margot and Topaze, and with their help soon transferred the Hooknorton furniture and precious relics of the loved old Manor House to West Hill, at Cowes, which he purchased, and settled his family comfortably in, before he left them again. Cowes was in every respect a much more convenient home for his wife than Clatterford, the nearness to Portsmouth and Spithead rendering it so accessible for the sailor-husband. Duty soon called him away, and he sailed to rejoin Lord Howe's squadron,

vigorously pursuing his naval career; and by his courage, ability, expanded thought, and comprehensive mind, he won the esteem and friendship of his superior officers. On his return to England with Lord Howe, he, to his great joy, obtained Post rank.

Again a proud, happy reunion with his family in their lovely home at Cowes. The portraits, the many valuable ornaments in furniture and silver, with the presence of Margot and Topaze, rendered it doubly dear and home-like to Hugh; and his wife, in her gentleness, and simple love and trust, emulated, indeed, his sainted mother. But the period of such happiness was but brief. Hugh was appointed very soon to the command of the "Suffolk," 74, bearing the broad pennant of Commodore (afterwards Sir Joshua) Rowley, and proceeded with him to the West Indies. He then joined the fleet under Admiral Byron, his old friend; was in the action of Granada,

and participated in all the services performed by that officer; also those of Sir Hyde Parker, Sir Samuel Hood, and Sir George Rodney, in April and May, 1780, and at St. Kitts, in 1782.

Besides these actions, he distinguished himself in assisting in the capture of the following convoy:—"La Fortunée," 42 guns, 247 men; "La Blanche," "Le President," "Le Bethune," "Le Marechal de Brissac," "L'Hercule," "La Jeune Henriette," etc., etc. He received, with much gratified pride, the command of "La Fortunée," which he had captured; and this frigate was appointed by Lord Hood to convey His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence on a tour round the West India Islands.

A painting still remains in the Christian family, representing the "Fortunée" in one of the ports of the Havannah, surrounded by boats filled with the principal inhabitants, coming off to pay a tribute of respect to his Royal

Highness. It is now in the possession of Captain Hugh Christian, grandson of our hero, Adjutant of the Volunteers at Glasgow.

During this cruise Captain Christian won the favour and interest of H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence, who ever after continued his condescension and esteem to him. In 1789 Captain Christian was made Equerry to His Royal Highness.

CHAPTER XVI.

LETTERS FROM H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CLARENCE, AND FULFILMENT OF THE DREAM IN PART.

THE following is one of several letters received about this time from the Duke of Clarence, by Captain Christian :—

"Jamaica,
"*December 1st*, 1788.

"DEAR CHRISTIAN,

"I last night received your kind letter, for which accept my sincere thanks. I am sorry to have given you so much trouble on a subject that will never answer.

"Lord Hood still continues to support Mr.

Schomberg; and so long as his lordship continues in that mode of conduct, so long I am determined to keep at a respectable distance; and if even this affair was done away, I have another fresh subject of complaint. I am, therefore, to request you will no more mention the name of Lord Hood to me. You have my leave to show this letter to his lordship; and now remember the matter is finished. I am very sensible of your politeness to me on every occasion, and was well aware that, had you been acquainted with my destination, I should have seen you on board the 'Andromeda.'

"It gives me concern to hear Sir Edmund Affleck is so dangerously ill.

"Another serious cause of uneasiness is the account you give me of Cherbourg. It is an alarming circumstance, and will be a terrible thorn in our side, if we cannot preserve the superiority of the sea.

"I am much obliged to you for the plan, and shall look out for it by the next packet. Let me request you will write frequently. Present my best wishes and most respectful compliments to the amiable Mrs. Christian, and ever believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"WILLIAM."

From this it will be seen that His Royal Highness had already honoured West Hill with a visit; and, indeed, the Duke of Clarence had more than once accepted refreshments at the hands of Anne Christian, and admired her simple elegance, and caressed her lovely children.

The following letter from Admiral Lord Hood will interest the reader; having the same date, and bearing reference to the misunderstanding that had arisen between H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence and his lordship, evi-

dently to the great regret of Captain Christian:—

"Admiralty,
"*Sept.* 10*th*, 1788.

"MY DEAR CHRISTIAN,

"I thank you for your affectionate letter of yesterday. I shall see Lord Chatham to-morrow, and will then sound him with respect to your wish of accompanying Mr. Rose across the water. I have not answered Captain Douglas' letter upon the subject, thinking the 'Southampton' at sea, but will write to him before the time arrives for his doing what he proposed. Believe me, my dear Christian, nothing ever gave me more concern than Prince William's withdrawing his confidence from me, nor would anything afford me a more heartfelt pleasure than a return of it. The last letter I had the honour to write to His Royal Highness was full of

expressions of that duty, attention, and respect I shall ever be proud to show him, and trust I shall never be wanting in either. You know all that has passed. Can you, therefore, think that I can with any degree of propriety, and without, indeed, being guilty of the greatest presumption, trouble His Royal Highness again until he does me the honour to allow me to do so from under his hand?

"Be assured I am not insensible of the manner in which you have stated this business to me, and am, with real regard, and all good wishes to Mrs. Christian,

"Most faithfully your friend,

"HOOD."

During this correspondence Hugh was enjoying a spell of happiness in his own little family, already increased to four—two daughters and two sons. The eldest of the latter

was the godson of Lord Hood, and called after him: born in 1784.

In 1787, on a preparation for a war with Holland, Captain Christian was appointed to the "Colossus," and remained in her until 1790, when he became Captain of the "Queen Charlotte," Lord Howe's flag-ship; and though this situation was held but for a short time, a stronger proof of his merits could not be adduced; and these were further confirmed when the war with France took place, in 1793, and Captain Christian was again selected by Lord Howe to fill the same situation, and remained with him till the end of the year, when he resigned the command on being appointed Chief Commissioner of the Transport Board, on the first formation of that department. In fulfilling these duties he obtained the friendship of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas (afterwards Lord Melville), and which he enjoyed until his death.

On the 1st June, 1793, he was raised to the rank of Rear-Admiral, when he resigned the situation at the Transport Board, and was shortly after called into active service. As an Admiral, Hugh enjoyed a season of much distinction and happiness at West Hill. His eldest daughter, Anne, was already seventeen years of age, a lovely, highly-accomplished girl, in forming whose mind her father took the liveliest interest; he made her his companion, and by her beauty and wit she became, though so young, the centre of attraction at all the entertainments at West Hill; her knowledge of languages she owed especially to her father, whose pupil she became during his residence at home. The following is one of many letters to his eldest daughter, written from "The Charlotte," Torbay:—

"*14th Sept.*, 1793.

"Although, my dear Anne, your occupations

have not permitted you to be quite that regular correspondent that I had hoped, yet I cannot bring myself to the resolution of repaying you in kind. I am very anxious about you, and every particular which relates to you is to me truly interesting, so that you need not hesitate, because you may suppose that your epistle may contain little more than the mere occurrences of the preceding day. To know that you have on that day watched your dear mother's wishes, and executed them before she had time to express them, would give me sincere pleasure; those *petits soins* are most grateful to a mind like your mother's, whose whole pursuit has been the promotion of your happiness, and that of your brothers and sisters; believe me, my dear girl, nothing can afford you such true happiness as the reflection that you have ever contributed to the comfort and happiness of your parents, whose every wish is the care of you. Why do I urge so much of this? Is it

because I doubt you? *Certainly not.* Then why is it? It is, my dear girl, that although I can and do rely with great confidence upon your doing what is right, yet the fashion of the world is too much upon the selfish principle of being ready to *exact*, though not so exact in the return of *les petits soins;* and that the integrity of intention is deemed sufficient. I wish to preserve you against the example of this influence, and that you should consider that it may be frequently necessary to sacrifice your own pleasure to that of the devoted mother, whom I know you love with perfect affection. Yesterday I received your French letter; it was laconic, but well written, correct, and with that vivacity that I always rejoice to see; it speaks of a heart quite at ease: do not neglect your Italian; above all, pursue the study of History; and when you can, accompany your reading with Geography and the study of the Globes. Your painting of Flowers graces my cabin;

and is in truth done in that real and airy style, that it bears some resemblance to you, my sweet girl; it seems gradually to be unfolding its beauty, and the more 'tis examined, the more 'tis admired. God bless you all, and be assured, and do you assure each, of the affection with which I am, my dear girl,

"Your anxious and tender father,

"HUGH C. CHRISTIAN."

In this, how plainly can we read the young boy's heart, developed with manhood! The "child is father of the man." The tenderness of his early years, the principles instilled in youth, are all to be discovered here! In his turn he inculcates the same unselfishness in his children. His other letters breathe the tenderest solicitude for his wife and family; his pride and joy in his daughter, who, being so much older than the others, was the comfort and support of the delicate mother, in the Admiral's absence.

His next appointment was as Commander-in-Chief of the Expedition to the West Indies; for, notwithstanding the unfortunate termination of Sir John Jervis's and Sir Charles Grey's expedition to the enemies' colonies in the West, the British Government persevered in her determination to reduce the West India Islands.

Accordingly, another attempt was organized, under the military command of General Sir Ralph Abercrombie; and as it was necessary that an active and confidential sea-officer should be joined with him, Admiral Christian was appointed to command the naval part of the expedition; which consisted of eight sail of the line-of-battle ships, several frigates, and more than two hundred sail of transports and merchantmen, having 16,000 troops on board. The Admiral hoisted his flag on board the "Prince George," of 98 guns; but owing to some unfortunate delay (a delay which was not

attributable to the naval commander, who was most urgent in his representations of the necessity of the fleet's sailing in the month of October), the armament did not sail until the 16th of November, when, however, everything promised fair; but on the night of the 17th the the wind shifted to the westward, and so terrific a gale came on, that the fleet was entirely separated; some put into Torbay, others into Portland, and others, with the Admiral, returned to Spithead.

Admiral Christian exerted himself with his usual energy, in conjunction with all under his command, to repair the damage which the fleet had sustained.

The fearful storm, unprecedented in its violence, had quite disabled the "Prince George," so that she was unfit to proceed again to sea. The Admiral consequently shifted his flag to another ship, and this time it was "The Glory," 98 guns, that was selected.

Thus came to pass the fulfilment of his mother's remarkable dream, recorded so many years before in her diary; long, long before her death! The little circle at West Hill had watched the fearful gale, the awful storm, with trembling hearts and earnest prayers—that changed to thanksgivings when the Admiral returned in safety to Spithead; but when the news came that his flag was transferred to "The Glory," Margot recalled the dream in its wonderful fulfilment, and related it to the wife and children of her dead mistress's son. *Literally* was it carried out, as we shall see later, in every particular, filling all with awe and reverence for those spiritual "things of which there are more, than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

CHAPTER XVII.

FULFILMENT OF THE DREAM.

THOUGH the sailing of the Admiral, owing to the stress of weather, and the necessity of many repairs, was necessarily deferred, the object of the Expedition was not abandoned; and so satisfied and pleased was the Government and the Admiralty with Admiral Christian's ardour, energy, and high courage during the awful storm in the Channel (a painting of which is preserved in the family), that in token of their high approbation of his merits and untiring perseverance, in the month of February following he was created a Knight of the Bath, and the motto "Perseverando" ordered to be

added to his family arms, and a naval crown to his crest. Thus, the red ribbon of the order crossed his breast, whilst his broad pennant flew out from the mast-head of "The Glory," fulfilling in every particular his mother's "dream." The fleet, the sail of the line, the shipping, the innumerable transports and frigates, the stormy sea, the thousands of soldiers on board,—every particular of the prophetic vision was accurately verified.

On the 20th of March, Admiral Sir Hugh Christian put to sea with the fleet and remainder of the ships and transports, and such additional ones as it had been thought necessary to add. The unfortunate circumstances which had retarded the arrival of the squadron were attended with very important consequences to the West India Islands. Insurrections, instigated by French influence, had broken ou in several of the English colonies, and St. Lucia had been reduced under the influence of

France. On the arrival of Sir Hugh Christian, the face of affairs soon assumed a more cheering aspect. Preparations were immediately made, in conjunction with Sir Ralph Abercrombie, for an attack on St. Lucia.

Sir Hugh Christian had his son Hood on board with him as midshipman, at this time a boy of ten years of age; and so full of intelligence and courage was the lad, that Sir Ralph Abercrombie offered Sir Hugh every inducement, and every possible promise of advancement, if he would allow his son to become a soldier under himself; but Sir Hugh, with much gratitude, said the boy must follow the profession of his fathers, in which, indeed, in after life, he greatly distinguished himself.

Sir Ralph Abercrombie and Sir Hugh Christian, with that harmony between the services so essential to success, arranged their plans for the immediate attack upon St. Lucia.

In his despatch the Admiral wrote: "I felt

the necessity of prompt measures, and therefore ventured a hasty arrangement rather than delay the ardour of the troops, or lose time in so advanced a season." The General's plan of attack required support in three separate divisions of ships of force. The three positions were supported by the Admiral to the entire satisfaction of the General, and the landing at three separate points effected, under the cannonade of the fleet. By the 20th of April the whole army was safely landed, and proceeded to the attack of the different posts of the enemy, which were of considerable strength, and defended with great obstinacy. Beaten at length from one post to another, the enemy retreated into Mome Fortunée, which was immediately besieged; and so closely and vigorously was the siege carried on, that on the 24th the enemy desired a suspension of arms, and on the following day a capitulation for the whole army took place, and St. Lucia

surrendered. Sir Ralph Abercrombie bestowed the highest praise upon Sir Hugh Christian for his zeal and ability, and the gallant support and co-operation which he received from him and the whole navy in general. In the orders issued by the General upon the occasion, he said,—

"During the services which have been carried on in the island of St. Lucia, all the courage and every exertion of the army would have proved ineffectual, if Rear-Admiral Sir Hugh Christian had not stepped forward with the utmost zeal and ability.

"To the energy and unremitting support I received from the Admiral and the Royal navy is, in a great measure, owing the success which has attended His Majesty's army. It affords me the greatest satisfaction to be able to lay before His Majesty the eminent services of Sir Hugh Christian and the Royal navy. By their efforts alone the artillery was advanced to

the batteries; and every co-operation which could possibly be desired or expected has been afforded by Sir Hugh Christian in the fullest manner."

Such was the effect of the activity and harmonious agreement of those two distinguished officers; and such was their eagerness to promote the service on which they were employed, that they lost not a moment in adopting measures for the security of those colonies, which Victor Hughes, hesitating at no acts, however inhuman, and no measures, however barbarous and dangerous, had placed in the utmost jeopardy. The friendship between Admiral Sir Hugh Christian and General Sir Ralph Abercombie continued to the end of the brief lives of both officers.

At this period there appears to have been great indecision and instability in the appointments of the Admiralty, which are at all times productive of mischief to the State.

In the short period that had elapsed since the commencement of the war, there had been FOUR Commanders-in Chief on the Leeward Island station:—namely, Sir John Jervis, Admiral Caldwell, Sir John Laforcey, and Sir Hugh Christian; and when the plans of the latter were being actually crowned with success, and vigorously put in execution, he was superseded by Sir Henry Harvey, and of course returned to England.

During Sir Hugh Christian's absence, his wife's health had much declined, and his anxiety for her is expressed in the short letter written upon his arrival in Portland Roads:—

"Beaulieu, in Portland Roads,
"*Nov.* 16*th*, 1796.

"MY DEAREST ANNE

"Will receive satisfaction in the knowledge of my arrival, and will feel and participate the anxiety under which I must necessarily

bend, from the uncertain state of your dear mother's health. I am also uncertain where to find you,—at Bristol, or at West Hill. The public despatches with which I am charged occasion me to go immediately to town. One day there will answer all the immediate business, and I shall fly to you wherever you may be. I shall go to the hotel in Jermyn Street, where I shall expect most anxiously your letter: grant, most gracious God, it may be fraught with good news! Hood is well, and will be from hence the moment the wind will permit. And now, tremblingly awake to the situation of my dearest wife, may God bless you all!

"Your most affectionate father,

"HUGH C. CHRISTIAN."

One brief year did Sir Hugh Christian remain, after this meeting, with his beloved family! It was one of unalloyed happiness,

save for the delicacy of Lady Christian; his presence, however, restored her wonderfully both in health and spirits. In the companionship of his eldest daughter, now a lovely, accomplished young woman, the proud and happy father found his greatest joy. At this time she received many offers of marriage; and during her brief visits from home to Newport, in the Isle of Wight, to join in the gaieties consequent upon the large depôt there, conducted herself with such propriety that she gained as much in respect as she did in admiration. The following letter, bearing upon this subject, is worthy of insertion, showing his high approval of her conduct:—

"West Hill, 1796.

"My dearest Anne,

"Your Mama has communicated your letter. The whole of your conduct is marked

with that propriety which is soothing to me, in the extreme. I felt, from a partial knowledge of circumstances, that your situation might be critical; it has been a moment of trial to you, and you have proved to me how much I should value you; but I regret that you are without my support on this occasion. That we are to see you on Thursday, does indeed make me rejoice; we have all most sensibly felt our separation from you. I hear from Mrs. Deane that 'you won the hearts of all the military, first surprised by your appearance, and then fixed by your very *great* propriety of conduct:' knowing you as I do, I am not afraid to communicate this very flattering account. Make my affectionate regards to the worthy persons with whom you are; reflect, my love, that 'the friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, should be grappled to thy soul with hooks of steel.' Mine is to you with every principle of affectionate kindness, for I am in truth, my sweet girl, more

proud than ever that I am enabled to subscribe myself,

"Your father, and your friend,

"HUGH C. CHRISTIAN."

In the month of September, 1797, Sir Hugh Christian was appointed to succeed Rear-Admiral Pringle, as Commander-in-Chief at the Cape of Good Hope. On this occasion he parted with his wife with greater reluctance and more distress of mind than upon any former occasion; dark presentiments of never meeting again filled his heart, and it was with anguish he took leave of his weeping, fading wife, and children. His anxiety to win a proper provision for them, it was, that prompted him to nerve himself for the sacrifice of leaving, for so distant a clime and so long a period, his beloved family.

In November, he accordingly sailed from England in the "Virginia" frigate, having on

board the Earl of Mornington, Governor-General of India, on his way to Calcutta. How much his absence weighed upon his mind, and how ardently he desired a recall, even after he had begun the voyage, the following letter will prove, written to Lady Christian :—

"'La Virginie,' just coming to anchor in Funchal Road, Madeira,

"*Nov.* 21*st*, 1797.

"My dearest Nancy,

"In the moment of our arrival, an American ship is passing, bound to Lisbon. I have therefore the power to say that here we are well in all respects. The 'Niger,' English frigate, has just joined me, and will return to you perhaps more quickly than this conveyance. I have long letters prepared to send by her, and in this cannot be more particular. I have written to Huskisson by this ship, and pressed strongly and most forcibly my return: it is a wish

too ardent, and too firmly rooted to admit of any palliation. I regret what I have done upon the question of separation from you, yet admit that the measure was unavoidable; thus does my affection war with my prudence: on you is fixed my every hope! Kiss and bless my children. Hood is well, so is Rushworth and Ewan—and all but myself apparently happy. I am most affectionately and tenderly, my dearest, best of women,

"Your faithful, obliged husband,
and sincere friend,
"HUGH C. CHRISTIAN."

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEATH.

THE "Virginia" arrived in Table Bay in the month of January, 1798. In February the Admiral wrote, among other letters, the following to his beloved wife:—

"*Feb. 17th*, 1798.

"My dearest Nancy,

"I wrote long letters yesterday, enclosing them to Huskisson. The ship by which they will be conveyed is yet in sight, and I send a boat to deliver this short letter, merely to say that I am better to-day, and, I hope, in

spirits somewhat more equal. The children are under your wing, I hope; they cannot be better. By none can they be better educated, or more virtuously instructed. Therefore keep my sweet Mary perpetually with you; she will not need any other instructors than yourself and Anne. With respect to your arrangements, want nothing, have every comfort, and endeavour to be happy and look forward to my return. I shall then be a regular domestic being—in truth I shall. This separation and distress of mind has taught me the folly of worldly pursuits, and my vanity and ambition are humbled. I send a box containing twelve ostrich feathers, and some beautiful worked muslin for gowns. Admiral Pringle's secretary will deliver them to you himself; I hope both he and the box will be favourably received by you. The squadron cruising off Mauritius will, I think, stand a good chance to be successful, and I hope I may obtain something for

the children. Two or three prize ships are now detained here. With my West India prize-money also, I hope we may be enabled to take tolerably good care of our dear girls. The boys will, I trust, be taken care of. This is my most anxious wish, and the reflection that strengthens and supports me in the sacrifice I have made—namely, that I am working for them. On them rest all my hopes of future happiness, unless Providence should be pleased to spare you. I sometimes feel a cheering hope that it may be so, and then again I droop by the dread of what may happen. Before this letter reaches you, I reflect that our time of separation will be near eight months, the full term of my separation from you in the West Indies. The last accounts which Lord Clyde gave me seem, I think, to premise that peace must soon take place, or something unexpected happen; to that event I look for my return. Oh, my dear wife! what do I feel

when I am writing to you, or thinking of you? Can you love me?—will you live for my return? Let me cherish the hope that I shall again prove myself your most attached,—most affectionate husband,

"HUGH C. CHRISTIAN."

"My Anne, my Mary, my Hugh, accept my love—my fondest wishes. Your brother Hood is well; Rushworth also. Adieu. God preserve you all!

"Your affectionate Father,

"H. C. C."

The following is a short letter from Anne Christian to her father:—

"West Hill, Cowes, 1798.

"MY DEAREST FATHER,

"Our sweet mother is rather better; the children all well . . . . .

I hear nothing new in the naval department, except my Lord Hugh's Indian destination, which is merely from the report of the day. I think your meeting at the Cape would be *curious*. Lord Keith, it is conjectured, is to have the Mediterranean command, and Lord St. Vincent to come on shore; but this is simply conjecture. We see but few people, and no sailors, as Popham is not in the Island.

"The young Princess Charlotte is spoken of as a prodigy of understanding. I could tell you a ridiculous story, which, however, you will not propagate at the Cape. Lady Elgin went to see her, and begged her, in her broad Scotch, to vouchsafe to kiss 'a poor crater.' The child, thinking it a term of endearment, obeyed; and some days after, when, amongst other toys, a picture of the King was presented to her in a large circle, she began to stroke it, always exclaiming, 'Poor crater,—a poor crater!' This has been the subject of much

merriment with one set. Her mother and the Prince are still on the worst terms imaginable. I hope you are now at Cape Town, and finding some amusement in the society of the witty Lady Anne, and my hero General Dundas. The future Governor Smith writes me, your present is a very despotic *Sancho* indeed. Our Lieut.-Government is disposed of, and to a soldier; you will say, so is everything. Ireland is quiet, but I fancy by no means content with its administrators,—Lord Cornwallis, however, much better approved than his rigorous predecessor. The newspapers sometimes amuse themselves by killing Buonaparte in Egypt, but I shall never believe this can be until I hear it more positively confirmed. Even now he has succeeded in doing wonders, and if he succeeds in revolutionizing Egypt everything may be expected from him. A Continental war everybody appears certain of in the Spring. They have already marvellously spun out their

negotiations by all the quirks and quibbles of diplomatic science, on the German side; and are, it is said, making every preparation for more offensive measures. The Russians are to retake Malta for their own chevaliers; but whether they will further engage in the general cause is not known. I have heard by a hasty chance of this opportunity, and the wind is now fair for the ship. I have, therefore, only time to add that I am ever my dear Papa's

"Dutiful and affectionate

"ANNE CHRISTIAN."

During Sir Hugh Christian's short command at the Cape of Good Hope, he effected many important and admirable arrangements in the naval department of that station; and by his vigilance gave the first intelligence to the British Government and to Admiral Rainier in India of the hostile intentions of Tippoo Saib, accompanied with his own opinion that he

was convinced that Tippoo would not have entered upon so decisive a measure as the sending an envoy to the Mauritius to express his implacable hatred of the English, and to obtain officers from thence, without an assurance of assistance from the French Directory —which Sir Hugh Christian foresaw, and foretold would be afforded by detaching a force from Toulon and occupying Egypt, and which actually took place under Buonaparte. By unremitting exertion Sir Hugh caused sundry traders and prize vessels to be fitted out with great despatch for the reception of between two and three thousand troops, which he sent from the Cape under the orders of General Sir David Baird, and which formed an essential and most necessary part of the army engaged in the capture of Seringapatam, and consequent subjugation of Tippoo Saib's dominions. These active and opportune arrangements were immediately communicated to Mr. Pitt, with

whom Sir Hugh kept up a close correspondence; and his despatches were received and read by Mr. Pitt to the Prince Regent, then *sitting in Council* upon the measures necessary to be taken to meet the unexpected movement of the French in the invasion of Egypt by Buonaparte and the support thus given to Tippoo Saib in India.

Sir Hugh Christian's forethought and promptitude in sending troops off at once from the Cape, upon *his own responsibility*, to India, met the difficulty that had arisen; and his conduct received the highest encomiums from the Prince Regent, who broke up the Council at once, desiring that Sir Hugh Christian should receive the thanks of the nation, and at the same time a distinguishing mark of his country's sense of his long and important services, in the title of Baron "Ronaldsway," in the Peerage of England. Mr. Pitt, whose friendship for the Admiral had continued

uninterruptedly since the year 1793, when the Admiral was Chief Commissioner of the Transport Board, had already offered Sir Hugh Christian a Baronetcy; but it had been refused, the latter frankly saying he coveted a higher title than one bestowed upon men for political support, without any merits of their own, save those of money or position; adding, he ardently desired an opportunity of serving his country in a way that might be of real service to the State, and deserve a mark of her approval. The occasion long sought had offered itself, been promptly seized, and nobly profited by;—"public thanks" were voted, and a Barony conferred! Mr. Pitt had already sounded Sir Hugh upon the title, if ever won, and recalled the name he had chosen; "Ronaldsway" having been the original residence in the Isle of Man of Sir Hugh Christian's branch of the Christian family, before the cruel political murder of Colonel Christian, on

Hango Hill, 1662—an event well known, both in history and fiction, to all readers.

Alas! however, for the gallant Admiral, the energetic, ardent, honourable sailor, the tender husband, the devoted father!—ere the Prince Regent's gracious praise could reach him, or the "thanks of the nation," or his loved country's distinguishing mark of approbation and gratitude reward his long naval career, death had closed for ever a life as valuable to England as it was to his own bereaved family. Only one year after his landing at the Cape of Good Hope did he suddenly and unexpectedly breathe his last in the distant clime, without one dear or near relative to soothe his dying moments. The distress of mind caused by his anxiety for his wife was terribly augmented by the sudden news at the Cape of the shipwreck of the "Garland," in which frigate his son, Hood, had been sent on a cruise to the Mauritius. Happily the

united efforts of the surviving sailors availed to save "the Admiral's son." Standing upon a reef for two days and nights, they supported Hood alternately in their arms, and shared with him their little store of rice, until they were all happily taken from the rocks where they had managed to save themselves—the sea often rising so high that it threatened constantly to wash them off. The unhappy father died believing his son drowned; and this event is supposed to have hurried on the exhaustion which terminated in death.

So ended a career in which, although not so fortunate in meeting with opportunities of distinguishing himself in brilliant actions as many in his profession, yet as an officer considered in all the requisites of nautical knowledge, experience, ability, and gallantry, and that degree of zeal which puts all the other qualities in motion—in these essentials, and all that may be comprised in a skilful officer

and judicious commander in the rigid and indefatigable discharge of his duties, he may have been equalled by many, but was certainly surpassed by none.

His designs were planned with judgment, and executed with ardour; and it is said by those who knew him well, that it would be difficult to find another possessing more calmness or real courage; that his conduct on all occasions was highly meritorious and universally approved, and that by his death his country lost an officer of untarnished honour and fidelity.*

* *Vide* Ralph's "Naval Biography," which is largely quoted.

CHAPTER XIX.

DEATH AGAIN.

WE have now followed the life of Hugh Christian from the time of his launching the toy-boat up to the period when he became Commander-in-Chief at the Cape of Good Hope, to the age of fifty-two years. We have seen him as a son—tender, obedient, bearing his mother's precepts ever before his eyes: in the words of his and her favourite poet,—

> "Be just, and fear not;
> Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy Country's, God's and Truth's!"

How consistently these aims of his existence

were carried out,—history, and the friendship and high esteem in which, as an *officer* and *friend*, Sir Hugh Christian was held, most clearly prove, and speak more distinctly in his praise than we can.

In his relation of husband to the wife of his early love, how devoted he was to the end, his affectionate letters show; and the distress of mind which ensued upon their last parting, no doubt hastened his death. As a father, we see his affection; his solicitude for his children most tenderly evinced in his last supreme sacrifice for their benefit; and the anxiety he ever expressed for their education and religious principles. Thus in every relation in life, with all its changes and chances, we may venture to say Hugh Christian's was a noble life, and one full of teaching for all. Just when he had reached the zenith of distinction, when the ambition of his life was indeed won, when the reward of his indefatigable devotion to his

country's welfare was adjudged, death came, and sternly removed him from this world,—we will humbly hope, to receive above the blessed sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

* * * * *

The bereaved circle at West Hill was happily still in ignorance of their irreparable loss, when Lady Christian herself sank a victim to consumption, which had long been feared, and rapidly developed itself after her husband's last parting: in point of *time* she survived him but two days! Now it was that the eldest daughter, Anne Christian's character was shown in all its beauty: devoted to her fading mother, she fulfilled, according to her father's injunctions, every affectionate duty to her, following not only his commands in this, but the dictates of her own warm heart. When the last sad end

came, the loss of the only parent in England, she sustained her sister Mary, a most lovely girl of sixteen; and sending young Hugh to Eton, and the youngest girl Joanna also to school in London, she accepted the hospitable shelter offered with her mother's relations, Lord and Lady Holmes, and Sir Henry and Lady Worsley at Gatcombe Park.

When the fatal intelligence came of Sir Hugh's death, it was deemed advisable to sell West Hill, and this was accordingly done. It was a deep grief breaking up the loved home, but no other course could be thought of.

Hood Christian, the eldest son, was still but young, only fourteen years of age, and therefore no protection for his sisters. The following letter written to Anne, the year before his father's death, will give some idea of the intelligence of the boy. It is copied with all faults:—

"Simon's Bay,
"'Tremendous,'
"*June 7th.*

'MY DEAR SISTER,

"I am now returned, after eleven weeks' stay at Stillingbosh, the prettiest village in the Colony, to my ship quarters, which I find much pleasanter than the den at Stillingbosh, in which I and Rushworth slept in one bed, Frazier (General Frazier's son) in another, and Sir William Clarke's brother in another, and the clergyman's son in another truckle bed. I understand Miss Rushworth eclipses all the young ladies in the Island. The Dutch are very ordinary; and as for their visits, you would think they went to visit a sick woman—the men in a hall, smoking pipes and talking low Dutch, when their Vrows are in a bed-chamber, drinking coffee, with a lump of sugar-candy in their mouths, without any eatable whatever. Mr. Dolling, our tutor, is quite

disgusted with them. When I talk of the uncouth Dutch, I must not include the Landress (properly Landrost) or magistrate of Stettinbosch, for he was very civil and polite to us, and lent us his waggon and eight horses to go fifty miles, which is more than most any of the rest had ever done, even to his intimate neighbour. They have no fires in any of their houses, but use a small chafing pan, with wooden embers, in a small stool, on which they put their feet and petticoats, and so warm themselves. The Dutch are all mean, and very proud, in general illiterate, and sing in one tone through their nose, playing wretchedly on very discordant instruments that would not sell at a broker's shop. The fat of sheep's tails is their standard gravy, everything stewed to rags; and the vegetables, hard cabbages, bad potatoes, stringy turnips, and sometimes good carrots. They sleep after dinner, eat enormously, generally sit in one posture, and

leave all their work to their slaves, who never do their ordinary tasks without being daily reminded and sometimes compelled by blows; but I must acquit the Dutch of inhumanity towards them—only a few instances of cruelty,—though they are very often brutal and unfeeling. Indolence prevails over a sordid avarice; and though slaves are now enormously dear, pride and the former passion multiplies their number. Comfort, dress, and everything else is tripled since our improvident countrymen are masters here. Papa is perfectly well; Rushworth, Ewan Christian, and Read are well. Now that I have given you a circumspect view of the manners of the Dutch, I think I may give you a history of the English. Mr. Ballard is made a Lieutenant into a dead vacancy, and I think Mr. Stanley will soon be a Captain; I wish he may: he is a good man. I have a horse of my own, and Mr. Dolling, who is a very excellent judge, says he is

without exception the best saddle-horse he has seen at the Cape, and will be still handsomer, as he is only three years and four months old. The person I bought him from told Papa that it was impossible I could ride him, as he was but just broke in; however, I managed him, and now ride him with great ease. Give my duty to Mama, and love to Hugh and Mary. I cannot write to them, as the ship sails to-morrow for England at seven in the morning. Tell Mary I have not forgot her many letters, and will write to her in a few days. I have begun a letter to her, but it is not long enough to answer hers. Remember me to all at home, and my friends and cousins in the Island.

"I remain, my beloved Sister,

"Your truly affectionate Brother,

"HOOD H. CHRISTIAN."

"My love and duty to Mama, and a kiss

to *little* Anne. (Joanna is not a pretty name for her.)"

After being saved, with some of the ship's company of the "Garland," Hood Christian served on board the "Boadicea," and distinguished himself by his courage during an attack made upon the Spanish fleet anchored under the batteries of the Isle of Aix. In 1800 he passed for Lieutenant, joining the "Phœnix," 36, Captain L. W. Halsted.

Long, however, ere this had his naval career begun,—for already in 1792 do we find him, though only eight years of age, a volunteer on board the "Colossus," 74, with his father, removing with him to the "Queen Charlotte," 100. He was sent in the Royal yacht, the "Princess Augusta," with Captain William Browell, to escort Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales to this country; after which he rejoined his father on board the "Prince George," was with him throughout the awful

gale of 1795, and sailed with him in "The Glory" for the West India Islands, where the high courage and daring of the boy won Sir Ralph Abercrombie's admiration, and the offer of a Captain's commission in the army.

Meantime, in the year 1799, six months after her parents' death, Ann accepted the offer of General Baron Hompesch, then commanding a Dragoon regiment quartered at Parkhurst, in the Isle of Wight. He was premier Baron of Germany, and a distinguished officer of very ancient family. Her Majesty, Queen Charlotte, acknowledged him as "my cousin." The marriage took place at Gatcombe Church, from the house of Ann Christian's kind relatives, the Worsleys, with whom Mary, the young sister, remained. The intelligence of her marriage Ann Christian conveyed to her friend, Lady Malcolm, in the following laconic epistle, the day of her marriage:—

"Gatcombe,

"1799.

"MY DEAR CLEMENTINA,

"It is all over, and I am ever

"Your affectionate friend,

"A. HOMPESCH."

"Dearest, dearest friend."

This marriage of the eldest sister led to the marriage of the second, in 1802, with Count Bylandt, at this time Aide-de-Camp to Baron Hompesch, and serving in his regiment. Naturally Mary Christian found her home with her sister after her marriage, and thus the intimacy, which ended in marriage, began. Count Bylandt was of an old Dutch family, and united a charming character and manner to unusual good looks; and Mary was pronounced the loveliest woman that had long been seen at the Court at the Hague, when Lucien Buonaparte reigned there.

I subjoin here two letters, one from Baroness Hompesch to her brother Hood, and one from Countess Bylandt :—

"Cork,
"*January 28th*, 1802.

"My dear Hood,

"Your letter afforded me in all respects great satisfaction. I rejoiced most sincerely to find that you were well in health, not dissatisfied with your present situation on board the "Phœnix," and still preserving that preference for your profession which may entitle you, with perseverance and zeal, to its best rewards and distinctions. With your father's example in view, you cannot fail. The Duke's interference is honourable, and I doubt not will be highly advantageous to you. I own I wish it may be possible for you to obtain that *one* step before the Peace is finally settled. When we may meet, my dear Hood, is so excessively

uncertain that I hardly know how to indulge the expectation; we shall probably be in England toward the month of April, but not to make any long stay, as we go to Germany from thence. However, when you are a gentleman at large, I hope you will not think it too distant to take a trip to the Continent to come and see me and little William. Such a tour may be pleasant and instructive to you, and I trust I need not say what pleasure it would give me. I have been wishing for a long time that something might bring you into ye Cove of Cork during our stay here. I have been very much an invalid lately, from various causes, principally owing, however, to my second confinement, when I was so unhappy as to lose a very lovely infant, which died a few days after its birth. This accident has of course much affected my health and spirits, and you would hardly know me, I am so thin and so much reduced. Mary is, on the contrary, looking extremely well;—she has

been with me since my return from Germany. We passed part of last May in the Isle of Wight, when all our friends were quite well, except poor Mrs. Worsley, of whom I still continue to receive rather unfavourable accounts. I congratulate you on your prosperous cruise, and still more on the prudence you showed in the disposal of what you obtained, which I learnt from Mr. Jackson, who has shown himself a kind and steady friend. Of the Elphinstones also I hear very frequently. Tina (afterwards Lady Malcolm) has not yet changed her name; you see how constant she is. Hugh, I am in hopes, will obtain a very good situation in India. He is everything we could wish, and at present spending his holidays with the Worsleys. We have met here our old friend Captain Mansfield, and Lord and Lady Gardner; Lord G. is commanding at Cove. I was very much afraid, when we first arrived here, that the Baron

would be obliged to go to Egypt, the regiment being under orders to join a detachment now there, but fortunately they did not go. I had written long letters to you, in case he found you on that coast; this I send to Mr. Jackson. He tells me he has received a box from you for Mary; I suppose her topazes. Adieu, my dear Hood. The Baron joins me in best wishes, and your little nephew offers his duty and a kiss. I am ever

"Yours most affectionately,

"A. HOMPESCH."

"Let me hear by every opportunity."

Joanna Christian, the youngest daughter, married ultimately the Rev. W. Robinson.

CHAPTER XX.

COUNTESS BYLANDT'S LETTER.

THE following letter from the Countess Bylandt was written two years later, from her husband's château—Bosdal, near Breda, in Holland.

It is full of domestic happiness, and breathes unbounded love and affectionate interest in her brother Hood and his family :—

"Bosdal,

"*Dec.*, 1804.

"My dearest Hood,

"Your last letter, informing me of your safe arrival, was received by me with the great-

est pleasure. Your first letter, which mentioned your having orders to sail, had much depressed my spirits, having all along flattered myself that we should soon meet, and I own I was never more sadly disappointed; but knowing the evil inevitable, my first wish was to learn that your voyage had been prosperous.

"By your account, the Brazils must be a very beautiful country, but I am sorry that India has not answered your expectations. I am sure a letter which you received from Clementina* was not read by you with indifference, as it brought the news of my safety, and the birth of a little nephew, whom you appear so much to desire. He was born the 14th of last July, and is now a very sweet little fellow. He has been christened Frederick Hugh Alexander, after his own father, your father, and my father-in-law, which is the custom. He has large dark-blue eyes, very

* Lady Malcolm.

marked eyebrows, very long eyelashes, dark hair, and a remarkably fair complexion. Some eight or ten years hence we hope to put him under your protection, as your brother wishes him very much to be a sailor.

"I nurse him myself, and you have no idea how very fond he is of me, though so young. I cannot leave the room, if he sees me, without taking him with me. He is very strong, but is beginning to suffer a little with his teeth. The last time I heard of our dear Anne's children, they were very well, and the little Therese * was growing much stronger, and promises to be like our sister Anne;—this will make her still more dear to me. I would give a great deal to see them; and most certainly if ever I have it in my power I will make a visit to Dusseldorf, merely on that account.

"Before my letter can possibly reach you, one announcing the death of our uncle, Lord

* Afterwards Countess Andreas Stolberg-Stolberg.

Holmes, will certainly have done so. He had suffered hardly any illness, and died from age more than any other complaint. Doctor Worsley * has succeeded to everything. Mrs. Worsley was tolerably well when I last heard from her; the children also. Captain and Mrs. Murray (the beautiful Miss Rushworth) were at Cork, in Ireland, where they hoped to remain. Your cousin Peggy continues in the same ill state of health. Admiral Parry is likewise dead,—a most sad loss to his family. I could not help feeling much for them, particularly on account of the similarity of our situations on their losing their father. This is almost all I know of our Island friends, except that Miss Blashford and Miss Green are married. I suppose by this time you may have had an opportunity of seeing Hugh at Calcutta. How I envy you! Poor little

* Doctor Worsley, D.D., of Gatcombe, Isle of Wight; his wife was Lord Holmes' daughter.

fellow!—I long to hear how he is pleased with India. I wrote some very long letters to you both some time ago, which I hope you will have received. Pray, my dear Hood, write to me constantly, and remember that the merest trifles will appear of importance to me if written by you. I set you a good example, and I am sure you cannot complain of me as a correspondent.

"I hope your next letter will mention something respecting promotion, as I am very anxious that it should take place. Whenever we *do* meet, how I shall find you altered!—grown out of my knowledge completely! I imagine you to be tall and thin, your face much the same as when I last saw you, but your figure very much changed. I dare say you will likewise find me altered, but of that I cannot be a good judge.

"I long very much to introduce you to your brother, my husband, who is equally anxious

with myself to see you. When you know him, I have no fear but that you will be very sincerely attached to him; but *till then* you must love him for my sake, as indeed he makes your sister most perfectly happy. He and Hugh were great friends. I have Hugh's caricature drawn by your brother so excessively like, that I keep it as I should a miniature picture of him, and have the greatest pleasure in looking at it. If possible, I will send you a sketch of me, in pencil, which may perhaps be pleasing to you.

"We are at present prevented returning to the Hague by the severity of the season, which is so great that all the rivers are frozen; and with so young a child it would be dangerous to attempt passing them. Adieu, my dearest Hood. I shall perhaps add a few lines from the Hague; but in case I should not, receive the assurance of my sincerest affection, as well as that of your brother. Write to me con-

stantly, and longer letters; and believe me when I hear from you and Hugh, I am gay and happy for a long time.

"Ever your affectionate Sister,

"MARY BYLANDT."

The anxiety of the two sisters for their brother's promotion was soon set at rest. He was made a Commander, for the gallant way in which he commanded a division of boats at the siege of Genoa; and he distinguished himself also by effecting a junction with the Austrians; and so pleased was Marshall Ott with the intrepidity, dash, and ardour of the young Commander, Hood Christian, that the Austrian Field-Marshal embraced him on both cheeks, and asked what he could do for him to prove his admiration of his conduct. The young sailor, then only sixteen, begged him at once to obtain his Post rank from Lord Keith,

the Commander-in-Chief—a request the Marshal immediately complied with, writing with his own hand a letter praising Hood's conduct, and asking for his promotion, presenting the happy lad with the precious letter.

Immediately upon his return to the fleet, Hood Christian presented himself on board the Admiral's ship, holding the Field-Marshal's despatch high over his head, and telling the officers upon the deck of his good fortune with all the glee and joy of boyhood.

But alas! Lord Keith received the young officer in his cabin with words of kind commendation for his conduct and courage, and proceeded to read the letter Hood presented to him from Marshal Ott, Hood waiting with beating heart for the confirmation of his hopes.

Lord Keith read the letter gravely and silently, then rose with something of a smile upon his fine countenance, as he marked the

boy's breathless eagerness. Kindly he advanced, and laying his hand upon Hood's head, he said,—

"Hood, I cannot comply with the Marshal's request: you are too young. Your own father would not have posted you. But go on as you are doing now, gain distinction by your courage and conduct, and if at the age of twenty-one you are not a Post-Captain, I will myself obtain that rank for you!"

Crestfallen indeed the young Commander left the cabin; but his own sense convinced him of the justice of the Admiral's views, and he showed much good temper and amiability on his return upon deck, where all hurried round him to offer their congratulations upon the promotion of which he but shortly before seemed so certain; however, with sailor-like kind-heartedness, they all assured him it was but delayed,—he was sure to win his epaulettes shortly.

Hood Christian distinguished himself soon after this in the assistance he rendered in cutting out the "Prima" galley, and the successful defence of Porto Ferrajo, besides being present in the capture and destruction, in 1801, of the French frigates "Carrière," "Succés," and "Bravure," while in the "Albion," to which ship he had been appointed in 1802.

Commander Hood Christian also assisted in the capture of "La Francaise," 36 guns, forcing her consort to take refuge under the batteries of "Fort Louis, près L'Orient." Thus we find the young sailor emulating the example of his noble father, and steadily, perseveringly, following up his profession, winning universally friends and praise, by his upright and admirable conduct. He proceeded in the "Albion" to India, and there joined the "Trident," bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Peter Rainier.

CHAPTER XXI.

HUGH CHRISTIAN.

MEANTIME, Hugh Christian, the second son, had gone from Eton to India, having received a writership, and proceeded to Calcutta to finish his education at the College there.

His talent for languages, and his great and steady perseverance, gained him the five splendid gold medals, carefully preserved by his sons, Captain Hugh Christian, Adjutant of the Volunteers, at Glasgow, and the Reverend Frederick Christian, at Wingfield Rectory.

Upon leaving the College, Hugh Christian, obtained a fine appointment suited to his

talents; he rose high in the Civil Service, and assessed the North-west Provinces, where to this day the natives demand to be judged by "Christian's Laws," a code which he drew up for them in their own language.

The brothers Hood and Hugh, always most affectionately attached to each other, had the happiness of meeting at Calcutta—Hood being on board the "Trident," 64, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Peter Rainier; and while Hood was holding the temporary command of Captain on board of her, a terrific gale of wind came on, in the Bay of Bengal; and during this critical time Commander Christian's conduct was so meritorious, energetic, and judicious, that he was subsequently placed by Admiral Rainier in command of the "Arrogant," guard-ship at Bombay, the Admiral paying him the tribute of well-merited praise.

He was next placed in command of the

"Victor," 18, to which sloop he was officially appointed in March, 1805.

In the following year he was holding the acting-captaincy of the "Sir Edward Hughes," 36, when he received his Post-Commission, dated January, 1806, and immediately returned to England, joining the overland military escort of Sir Arthur Wellesley.*

The journey was full of interest to the young sailor, who had travelled but little as yet by land, and he became a great favourite among the military, and was especially noticed as a pleasant boon companion by Sir Arthur Wellesley.

During a halt of two days on the route a steeplechase was arranged by the military, and Sir Arthur Wellesley particularly requested Captain Christian to enter the lists, believing that they would derive vast amusement from the sailor's riding. Hood Christian accepted

* From Calcutta to Bombay.

the challenge, but very wisely determined to avoid an *exposé* of his riding, having never seen a steeplechase in his nautical life, much more ridden one. He therefore prevailed upon a young cavalry officer, a friend of his, to wear his uniform and personate himself.

The two young men accordingly changed uniforms, and being both slight, fair, and of the same height, the deception was never found out; and greatly to the surprise of all, the naval officer took the lead in the steeplechase, and gallantly kept it, winning the stakes, to the great delight of Hood Christian himself, who witnessed the triumph of his substitute, wearing himself the uniform of his military friend, and joining heartily in the cheers for the "blue jacket."

At the subsequent supper none was more cordial in his praise of the courageous riding of the young sailor than Sir Arthur Wellesley, and he and the assembled company were about

to toast the "expert naval equestrian," when Captain Christian rose and explained the trick he had played upon them, begging the praises might be awarded where really due. The surprise was great—all had been so completely taken in; but the hoax excited much amusement.

After landing in England once more, after so many years' absence, Hood made his way as speedily as possible to the Isle of Wight, where his happy childhood had been spent. Alas! how changed to him was all at Cowes when he landed! He found his old home, West Hill, occupied by strangers, looking still bright and pretty, standing above the little town. He obtained leave to enter and stroll round the grounds, recalling, as he looked at the windows, the anxious days he had passed watching Spithead and his father's ship, remembering the joy of his father's return from sea, the pride and necessary preparation for

the gracious visits of H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence, when his mother and fair sisters themselves would bring refreshments to their royal visitor, ever so amiable and courteous.

It was upon one of these occasions when the royal Duke was at breakfast at West Hill, that little Hugh, the youngest boy, being indulged with a seat next to his father, (with whom he was an especial favourite,) was helping himself to a quantity of butter, unobserved by any of the family, when the Duke, remarking the fact, said to the Admiral,—

"Sir Hugh, that child is eating too much butter!" The little boy angrily exclaimed, "Never mind, Mr. Prince, it is not your butter!" The royal Duke laughed immensely at his answer, and prayed his forgiveness at the hands of his mother, who would have sent the spoilt boy from the room.

H.R.H. ever continued his friendship for the lad, and even in after years, wrote many long

letters, with his own hand, to Hugh Christian when in India; the letters are all carefully treasured up by his sons.

Thus did memory carry back to happier days the only remaining member in the Isle of Wight of Sir Hugh Christian's once happy family circle; recollections, half-pleasing, but mostly sad, were all that remained, save the vault in Northwood Church, where lay the earthly remains of Lady Christian. Hood's elder sisters were married to foreigners, and both abroad, and the youngest at school, so that Hood was indeed isolated in the midst of old haunts and familiar scenes.

He was, however, most warmly received by his relations, the Worsleys, and he made his home with them during his stay in his native island.

It was a great calamity to the Christian family, that, adding to the loss of father and mother, all the effects of the Admiral were

taken by the French on their way home to England under the care of Sir Hugh Christian's Flag Lieutenant, who himself was made prisoner, and long detained in France. All the books, plate, pictures by Northcote of Lady Christian and the daughters, and—almost more precious than all—the truly valuable correspondence of Sir Hugh with Mr. Pitt, Lord Howe, Lord Clive, Sir Ralph Abercombie, Lord Keith, Mr. Huskisson, and others, the most distinguished men of that day, were all taken with the transport, and lost to the young orphaned girls and boys.

Mr. Pitt's death also was a great misfortune to Hood, who joined cordially in the national lamentation for the great statesman, who had always shown such marked kindness and favour to Sir Hugh Christian; and possibly, had he lived, young Hood, though but fourteen years of age, might have enjoyed the notice of Mr. Pitt, and perhaps have won some of the

honours destined for his father, when death carried the latter off, ere they reached him.

Hood himself won every step of promotion in his naval career, by his own meritorious and courageous conduct.

It was at this time, on his return to the Isle of Wight as Post-Captain, at the age of twenty-two, that his isolated position depressed his spirits, constantly reminded by surrounding scenes of his lost family circle, dispersed and cut down by the omnipotent mower Death. It was now that the great human consoler came, love, and with sacred fire, warmed the chilled and loving heart into life and happiness again! How little do we understand the under-current perpetually flowing, flowing, beneath our feet, leading us to good or ill, to happiness or misery! The most ordinary events veil the end, to which we are insensibly led; we yield to them with utter indifference, even with reluctance sometimes, and they bring us the com-

fort we want, or the happiness for which our hearts long! So does Providence in merciful provision lead us unconsciously to our destiny!

There was a brilliant ball in Newport, then a gay country town, constantly full of military, the depôt at Parkhurst being very full at this time.

Hood, like most sailors, was devoted to dancing, and easily persuaded to accompany his relations to the ball, though he declared he was little inclined for gaiety.

Among the beauties of the evening was the daughter of Samuel Shute, Esq., of Fern Hill, a lovely place between Ryde and Newport, a picturesque mansion with tower and cloister, like an old Priory, surrounded by luxuriant shrubs and fine cedars.

It was Harriet Shute's first ball; she was eighteen, and according to the custom for the *débutante*, was to dance a minuet with the Governor of the Island, Lord Bolton. She

went through the ordeal—which it surely was, with a room full of people, watching the solitary dancers—with grace and elegance, and that modesty which enhances all other charms; and the performance elicited great applause.

Among the many spectators of the minuet was Hood Christian, who clearly "fell in love" at first sight, for as soon as the minuet was concluded, he obtained an introduction to the fair dancer, and secured her hand for several dances; thus began an acquaintance which soon ripened into warmer feelings, and he won in the end a partner for life!

Harriet Shute was an orphan; her father was dead, and her Welsh mother, Henrietta Anna Margaretta Gwynne, also. The latter had been a great beauty, dying very young, leaving three children: Helena (afterwards the wife of the Ven. Archdeacon Hill), Harriet, and Thomas Deane. The portrait of the mother, painted

by Sir Thomas Lawrence in pastel, though executed in the year 1784, is perfectly fresh still (in 1872). The earnest young sailor lost no time in presenting himself at Fern Hill, where he obtained a cordial reception from Harriet Shute's step-mother, and brother and sisters. So ardent, indeed, was the Post-Captain's suit, that only a short time elapsed ere he was the accepted lover of the fair dancer, who, amidst several admirers, among whom were men of larger fortunes and finer features than the young sailor, selected the one who had won her heart with the impetuosity and ardour for which seamen are notorious.

In the winter, Mrs. Shute, according to custom, proceeded to Bath, to the family mansion in Pulteney Street, accompanied by Captain Christian. At Bath the necessary preliminaries were soon arranged, the trousseau purchased, the Manor of Hooknorton settled by Hood upon his bride. The beautiful Manor

House had long been occupied by strangers, who rented the shooting over the Manor; the homestead was still occupied by the Ffrench family, though another generation inhabited it since we first visited it in 1758.

All the young sailor's prize-money was spent in ornaments for Harriet;—strings of pearls rivalled in whiteness the slight throat they encircled, and diamonds shone amidst her dark tresses; till now, Hood never knew the value of money,—now he felt proud that he could deck his bride in gems purchased by his own exertions, the reward of gallant deeds!

In 1808, a brilliant wedding took place at the Abbey Church—a splendid Brussels point veil, the gift of the Countess Bylandt, and a Lisle lace dress, over satin, the lace a gift of Baroness Hompesch, was the bridal costume of Harriet Shute. Her miniature represents her in her wedding dress—a sweet face—with large hazel eyes, lovely complexion, magni-

ficent hair, in curls, and bows above her fair brow, and a slight graceful form.

The first trip the wedded pair made together was to Hooknorton, which Hood had never visited before.

They were warmly received at the homestead by the farmer and his wife, who, though still middle-aged, well remembered Sir Hugh Christian and the sweet lady of the Manor; and many anecdotes were related to Hood's attentive ears of his own lovely grandmother.

The occupiers of the Manor House were absent, and Hood and his wife obtained leave to walk over the old hall, the withdrawing room, the bed-chamber, of which they had heard so much; but to them all seemed dreary and gloomy,—very different to Margot's accounts of the old home! With the bright spirits she remembered then had passed away the life, the light, and the glory of the Old Manor House! and Harriet shivered as

she crossed the old hall, out into the old porch, and felt the warm sun again, whispering, "Thank God, dear Hood, we do not live here!"

For Hood himself, he felt much the same: fondly as his father had loved to dwell upon his own childhood at the Manor, upon the loveliness of his sweet mother, upon the beauty of the old home, it struck but chill upon his heart; and then, too, it had passed into the hands of the heirs of that Captain Shelley, of hated memory!

CHAPTER XXII.

HOOD'S NAVAL CAREER CONTINUED.

CAPTAIN CHRISTIAN and his bride settled themselves at a pretty place called Seagrove, between Ryde and St. Helens, in the Isle of Wight, close to the sea.

Here, after a brief spell of happiness, Hood left his young wife, being appointed to the command of the "Heroine," forming part of the Walcheren Expedition, and one of the ten frigates which, under Lord William Stuart, forced the passage between the batteries of Flushing and Cadsandt, on the afternoon of August 11th, 1809. On this occasion Captain Christian was gazetted officially.

He was next appointed to the "Iris," 36,

employed on the coast of Spain, where, in actively co-operating with the patriots, he distinguished himself by the judgment and courage of his conduct.

He took Castrò, of which fortress, on being made Governor, he kept up a successful defence, and was again specially mentioned in the official *Gazette*.

The Prince Regent had desired that officers who were gazetted for such distinguished conduct should be made "Companions of the Bath," or Baronets, but Hood Christian had no one, no friend now in office to press his claims, or see justice done the young officer, and his name was passed over, while other officers, who were only *once* gazetted, were rewarded, according to the Prince Regent's order: this was a great mortification to Hood, especially as he had been mentioned in both official *Gazettes* with great encomium. He won the hearts of all the Spaniards at Castro during

the period that he was Governor of the fortress; and subsequently, when a report reached Castro that Hood Christian had been killed in action, the Spaniards testified the liveliest grief, and as he was not a Roman Catholic, they begged that a midnight mass might be solemnized for the repose of his soul, which was actually done.

Harriet, his wife, went to Plymouth, under the care of Admiral Lord Keith, whose daughter, afterwards Countess Flahault, showed her great friendship: together they practised duetts on the piano, and together they painted on china, then a great amusement among the ladies. A beautiful vase and plate still remain as evidence of Harriet Christian's talents.

When Captain Christian was again on half pay, they returned to the Isle of Wight. His last appointment was as Commodore of the Cape of Good Hope, when he greatly dis-

tinguished himself by his firm determination to put down slavery, maintaining, even at his own expense, a ship full of slaves, that ultimately was not condemned. This affair cost the Commodore more than £2,000, never repaid to him; but it put the seal to the suppression of slavery at the Mauritius, where he found the slaver.

In the year 1838 Hood Christian became Rear-Admiral; he was then living at Dusseldorf, to be near his relations, the Hompesch family, for the education also of his young daughters.

In 1850 he went to Malta for his health, which had become extremely delicate; a cough attended with much weakness necessitating the change of climate.

At Malta the Admiral's health greatly improved, but he had the affliction to lose his beloved wife, who faded away, and whose mortal remains are interred in the picturesque

cemetery without the walls of Valette. After her death he returned to England, and settled at Ryde, Isle of Wight, but his health failed gradually, and he died in 1851, surviving his wife only one year. Of his four sons none now survive their father; the eldest, Hugh Holmes, in the Indian Cavalry, fell a victim to the Indian climate, dying at the early age of twenty-one years, in 1834.

William Alexander, also in the army, died from the effects of a violent chill, caught by getting wet upon guard, which ended in galloping consumption, carrying him off at twenty-one years of age, at Shanklin, Isle of Wight, 1838. He died at his uncle's, the Archdeacon Hill's, and is buried at Bonchurch.

Thomas Hompesch entered the navy, like his father, at the age of nine years, serving, in the first instance, on board his father's ship.

As gunnery Lieutenant, with Admiral Sir Robert Stopford, at the Siege of Acre, he

gained great praise and received a medal, but his health failed when he became Commander, and he died at Ryde, Isle of Wight, and was buried in the family vault, at Northwood, Cowes.

The youngest son, George Jackson Christian, the only one who was married, was killed at Seetapore, being there as magistrate and commissioner, during the mutiny in 1857. The touching scene of George Christian's end is best described by Captain Hutchinson in these words :—

The massacre at Seetapore began, and Mr. Christian, finding all were turning against him, walked deliberately down towards the river at the back of the house, preceded by his wife with an infant in her arms; their other child being already across the river with the nurse, having been taken over by Sergeant Major Morton.

It is not quite certain whether Mr. Christian had, with his wife, reached the opposite bank of

the stream, or was still on the bank on this side, but the evidence shows they were together, and were crossing, when Mr. Christian fell dead, pierced by many balls! Nobly had he braved the storm, nobly he died! His poor young wife, from the evidence elicited, appears to have been a little in advance of him, as he fell upon his face, shot from behind by the traitors around his own house.

Mrs. Christian sank down beside him, with her little babe in her arms!

At this moment the infernal din is portrayed as baffling all description, and yet a more exquisitely touching scene could hardly be conceived than the one before us!

There sat the young Christian mother and *widow* a little moment, stricken down by grief and despair, gazing speechless upon her dead husband, forgetful of all, having seen nothing but him!

Her own house behind her in flames, casting

its lurid light upon the little stream, already copiously stained with European blood, offered but a temporary obstacle to some 1,200 fiends in human form, who, with an incessant yelling, shouting and firing, rained from their muskets death on all around her! It was but a moment's pause, then the savages burst through; they knew no mercy: in the full swing of passions unrestrained, all sexes, all ages were alike to them; speedily the infant and its mother were numbered with the dead!

Thus ended the career of George Jackson Christian, the youngest and most talented son of Admiral Hood Christian, aged only thirty-six.

At Cambridge he had gained several prizes, at Haileybury he gained the gold medal, and other prizes, so that altogether he had forty-two volumes of prize-books. He entered upon his Indian career only in the year 1844, thus in the course of only thirteen years he had

risen so rapidly in the Civil Service, as to be placed in the same position, and with parallel appointments to men who had been twenty years in the Service!

Lord Lawrence, who knew him well, as George Christian was for some time his secretary, spoke most highly of him, saying in a letter to George Christian's sister, "Your brother was a man of great promise, and would, had he lived, have risen to high distinction."

He had done his best to protect the European inhabitants of Seetapore, gathering them all to his house, which he fortified, forming a municipal force of natives; but as soon as the rebel Sepoys appeared they turned against their masters, and flight from the back of the house, across the narrow river, was all that remained.

Mr. Christian and his wife were the last to leave his post, and all the Europeans as-

sembled there had left the house, when he abandoned it also to the fury of the Sepoys.

The captivity of his little girl in Lucknow, and death of the beautiful blue-eyed child in prison, are too well known to be repeated here.

Of Admiral Hood Christian's daughters the record is brief. The eldest, Ann Helena, married the Honourable Justice Menzies, at the Cape of Good Hope. She was older than all her brothers, and died, after surviving her husband a few years, leaving several children.

Mary Isabella and her sister, Harriet Margaret Anne, were younger than their brothers: the former married Major Gordon, and died, leaving two infants: the second married Arthur Traherne, son of Morgan Traherne, Esq., of Coytrehen, Glamorganshire.

The only members of this branch of the Christian family left, are Hugh, son of Hugh

Christian, Sir Hugh's second son, and Frederick, his brother; the former served long in the army, and is now Adjutant of the Volunteers at Glasgow, the latter, the Rev. Frederick, lives at Wingfield Parsonage, Derbyshire. They have young sons, who, we hope, may ultimately enter the navy,—the profession of their forefathers, of whom we may indeed say, "they did their duty in that station in life to which they were called," serving to the utmost their King, Queen, and Country.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LETTERS FROM WILLIAM THE FOURTH TO SIR HUGH CHRISTIAN.

AFTER the death of Admiral Hood Christian's last surviving son, the Manor of Hooknorton was sold, the entail ending. The family, Ffrench, still occupied the homestead at this time, viz., in the year 1859.

We must mention the devoted old Welsh servant, Margot; she died at an advanced age, beloved and respected by all who knew her; beautiful even with grey hairs; wearing her national costume to the last.

Topaze, the faithful black servant, followed the fortunes of his young master, sailing with him as steward.

An amusing anecdote is related of him. Upon one occasion, when Captain Christian was on shore in a foreign port, poor Topaze was much exasperated by the teasing of the sailors on board, and at length complained to the lieutenant of the watch, Mr. Rushworth, saying, "The sailors do teaze me, Massa, I cannot do my work; and they call me black debbel, and say I bring 'em bad luck, and they get no prizes; and I'se very unhappy!" and, old man almost as he was, Topaze fairly blubbered. Mr. Rushworth was rather excitable and eccentric, and espoused Topaze's cause with much temper, desiring the boatswain to pipe "all hands on deck," which was accordingly done. Whatever their occupation, each and every sailor had to leave off and appear on deck.

Very soon the ship's company appeared massed together, standing opposite Mr. Rushworth and Topaze; the former raised his hand

to excite attention, and then said, "Ship's company! you will all hold yourselves *black* until further orders!" The seamen stared, Topaze grinned, the whistle rang out shrilly, "piping down," and the men, astonished, taken by surprise, descended to the lower decks, quietly; but soon a burst of laughter, which swelled into a roar, pealed from below!

Captain Christian, when he came on board again, laughed also at the absurdity of the order; but enjoined henceforth in a few pithy cordial words, that his old and valued servant, Topaze, be left in peace by the seamen.

Upon the occasion of the Duke of Clarence paying Admiral Hood Christian (then Commodore) a visit, after cordially shaking hands with Mrs. Christian, he patted the head of the little girl, standing by her mother's side, and said, as he caught her up in his arms, and gave her a kiss, "I should know you anywhere, little one, for a Christian!" Little Margaret treasured up

the royal kiss ever after in her heart, though at the time, being only four years of age, she was much frightened.

The following are letters written at different times by H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence to Admiral Sir Hugh Christian, and with a copy of them we will conclude this slight memoir of his family.

"Halifax,
"*Sept.* 30*th*, 1788.

"DEAR SIR,

"Permit me to recommend the bearer of this, Mrs. Dalrymple, to your notice, and that of the amiable Mrs. Christian; this lady is returned from America, and proposes spending the winter at Portsmouth, as her husband returns with his regiment next spring to England; you will, my good friend, easily perceive myself interested for this lady, when I inform you her husband, Captain Dalrymple, passes the winter with me at Jamaica. Any

kindness or attention shown to her I shall receive as a proof of your attention to me, which I have on so many occasions experienced from you. Let me desire you to present my best wishes and most respectful compliments to Mrs. Christian; remember me to my good Martin, and ever believe me,

"Dear Sir,

"Yours very sincerely,

"WILLIAM."

(*Directed to West Hill, Cowes.*)

"Clarence Lodge,

"*Jan. 22nd*, 1792.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am to return you many thanks for your obliging letter of the 19th instant, which came safe to hand yesterday, and in answer cannot help observing that in the present critical and awful state of affairs in this country, it is not only a measure replete with danger, but mischief; the Minister, if he has at heart the

true interest of the kingdom, will bring nothing forward to cause violent debate, but those measures immediately requisite to counteract the spirit of licentiousness, little short of rebellion, and which, if not subdued, must end, I am afraid, fatally. I fancy these sentiments of mine are not very different from yours, and those who are sincerely attached to the King and Constitution, for they never can, or ought to be divided.

"By all means let me know the various steps that are taken, *pro* and *con*, in this New Forest business; and likewise, how the people feel in your island, and their sentiments as to reform, etc., etc., to the end of this new, and truly damnable political creed.

"My best wishes attend Mrs. Christian and your family, and ever believe me,

"Dear Sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"WILLIAM."

(*Addressed also to West Hill, Cowes.*)

"St. James's,
"*December 25th*, 1793.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 17th instant, and feel very much obliged to you for the communication of Lord Howe's signals. You ask me my opinion relative to Lord Howe's conduct, which I must try to take up from the year 'seventy-six, when his lordship went to America. He is in my opinion deservedly unpopular for his conduct with his brother in not doing their utmost against the rebels; in his lordship's conducting the British fleet to the relief of Gibraltar, in 'eighty-two, I shall *ever* think him to blame in risking an action, after he had performed the service on which he was sent, with so superior a force as the combined fleets of France and Spain. In the armament of 'ninety, Lord Howe made himself unnecessarily unpopular by taking Curtis as his first Captain, and not permitting officers to

go on shore; during this last summer this same unpopularity from the *same* motives have caused a violent party in the fleet, and consequently the letters teem with abuse relative to his lordship's conduct, when in sight of the enemy's fleet, the *first* and *last* cruise.

"I believe from my information that on both these occasions Lord Howe did his duty to his King and his Country, tho' at the same time I think his lordship was ill-advised, upon the sight of the French squadron during the last cruise, not to make the general signal for chase, to please John Bull.

"I am sure you will forgive my freedom. You are, I understand, shortly again to return to sea, with the different convoys, and then I suppose you will have some quiet. Adieu for the present, and ever believe me,

"Dear Sir,

"Yours sincerely,

Addre ssed as before.) "WILLIAM."

"Petersham,

"*Aug.* 10*th.* 1702.

"DEAR SIR,

"This morning I received yours, and in return am to acknowledge your kind enquiries after Mrs. Jordan. The papers have on this occasion told truth, for she was last week for some hours in danger, but now, thank God, she is much better, and I hope in a fair way of perfect recovery. It is my present intention to set out on the 23rd instant for the seaside, in order that Mrs. Jordan may bathe for six weeks. As the place we mean to go to is no great distance from the Isle of Wight, and if you have nothing better to do, I shall be very happy to see you there, and Mrs. Jordan has likewise desired me to say as much.

"I return you my thanks for the grouse.

"I hope Mrs. Christian and your fair daughter* are well, to whom I beg you will

*Afterwards Baroness Hompesch.

present my best compliments, and ever believe me, "Dear Sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"WILLIAM."

"Petersham, *Sept. 26th*, 1792.

"DEAR SIR,

"I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your friendly letter of 21st instant, and to request you will accept Mrs. Jordan's thanks as well as mine for your very handsome offer of your house in the Isle of Wight; it is still a matter of doubt whether we shall go at all to the seaside, the weather being so far advanced, but the Duchess of Cleveland has promised me a house at Margate, which if I go I mean to use. I should be very sorry to deprive you and Mrs. Christian of yours.

"My best wishes attend her, and your fair daughter, and ever believe me,

"Dear Sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"WILLIAM."

"Clarence Lodge,
"*Feb.* 11*th.*

"DEAR CHRISTIAN,

"I have been hitherto prevented answering you by attending Mrs. Jordan, who has been very ill indeed. . . . . I should be very sorry if you were to come up to town one moment sooner on my account than is perfectly convenient to you; do not think of London until the King's birthday. I hope both Mrs. Christian and yourself like your present situation; for peace, I believe, will continue.

"Compliments to Dick Onslow and Hyde Parker, and ever believe me,

"Dear Christian,

"Yours sincerely,

"WILLIAM."

(*Directed to Portsmouth, where the Admiral and Mrs. Christian then were.*)

The following letter from Admiral Sir Henry Martin, called by H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence "My good Martin" in one of the foregoing letters, will perhaps be interesting, referring as it does to Lord Howe, and the appointment of Sir Roger Curtis.

"London,
"*Oct.* 19*th*, 1790.

"You do me but justice, my dear sir, in supposing that I have felt some anxiety for you on account of your new situation; for although in my own mind I do not know any officer in the whole service more equal to it, yet I think it will be attended with much anxiety and inconvenience to you.

"So distinguished and honourable a testimonial, however, of the confidence and high opinion of such a man and such an officer as Lord Howe, must be truly flattering to everybody, and in that view of the business I must congratulate

you. For your own comfort I should rather have wished you still in the "Colossus," but a public man ought not to hesitate, or be governed by private feelings, when called forth to honourable and important, though laborious service; laborious I think I may fairly call it, as fatigue of mind is more oppressive than that of the body. I am sure, however, you will acquit yourself in such a manner as not only to feel self-approbation, but to merit general applause and esteem. That under all circumstances you may do so is the sincere belief and heartv wish of,

"My dear Sir,

"Your faithful friend

and humble servant,

"HENRY MARTIN."

"Mrs. Martin and my daughters join me in best compliments to you, Mrs. and Miss Christian. I have not offered my congratulations to

Sir Roger Curtis on his new appointment, because, though highly honourable, I much doubt, from what I hear, of its proving comfortable for him."

THE END.

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